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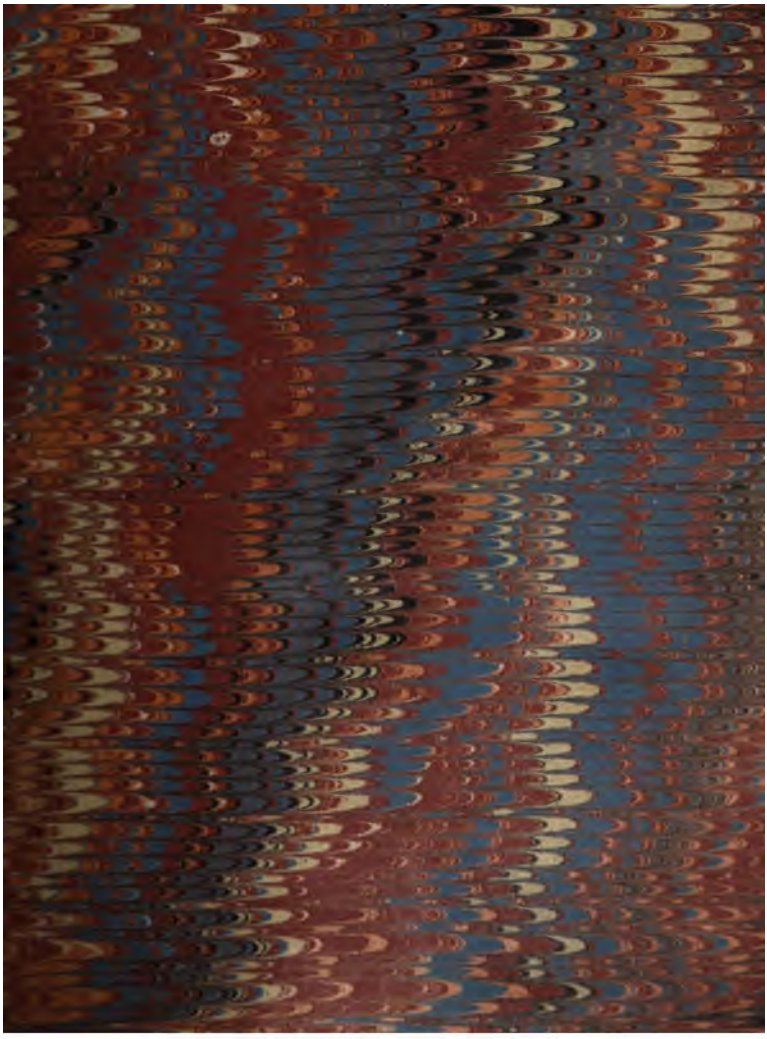

Norwood N. Hallowell.

Christmas 1855.

From Mother.

THE

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OF

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DISCOURSES.

CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

MATTHEW xvii. 5: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

THE character of Christ may be studied for various purposes. It is singularly fitted to call forth the heart, to awaken love, admiration, and moral delight. As an example, it has no rival. As an evidence of his religion, perhaps it yields to no other proof; perhaps no other has so often conquered unbelief. It is chiefly to this last view of it, that I now ask your attention. The character of Christ is a strong confirmation of the truth of his religion. As such, I would now place it before you. I shall not, however, think only of confirming your faith; the very illustrations, which I shall adduce for this purpose, will show the claims of Jesus to our reverence, obedience, imitation, and fervent love.

The more we contemplate Christ's character, as exhibited in the Gospel, the more we shall be impressed with its genuineness and reality. It was plainly drawn from the life. The narratives of the Evangelists bear the marks of truth, perhaps beyond all other histories. They set before us the most extraordinary being who ever appeared on earth, and yet they are as artless as

the stories of childhood. The authors do not think of themselves. They have plainly but one aim, to show us their Master; and they manifest the deep veneration which he inspired, by leaving him to reveal himself, by giving us his actions and sayings without comment, explanation, or eulogy. You see in these narratives no varnishing, no high coloring, no attempts to make his actions striking, or to bring out the beauties of his character. We are never pointed to any circumstance as illustrative of his greatness. The Evangelists write with a calm trust in his character, with a feeling that it needed no aid from their hands, and with a deep veneration, as if comment or praise of their own were not worthy to mingle with the recital of such a life.

It is the effect of our familiarity with the history of Jesus, that we are not struck by it as we ought to be. We read it before we are capable of understanding its excellence. His stupendous works become as familiar to us as the events of ordinary life, and his high offices seem as much matters of course, as the common relations which men bear to each other. On this account, it is fit for the ministers of religion to do what the Evangelists did not attempt, to offer comments on Christ's character, to bring out its features, to point men to its higher beauties, to awaken their awe by unfolding its wonderful majesty. Indeed, one of our most important functions, as teachers, is to give freshness and vividness to truths which have become worn, I had almost said tarnished, by long and familiar handling. We have to fight with the power of habit. Through habit, men look on this glorious creation with insensibility, and are less moved by the all-enlightening sun than by a show of fire-works. It is the duty of a moral

and religious teacher, almost to create a new sense in men, that they may learn in what a world of beauty and magnificence they live. And so in regard to Christ's character; men become used to it, until they imagine, that there is something more admirable in a great man of their own day, a statesman or a conqueror, than in Him, the latchet of whose shoes statesmen and conquerors are not worthy to unloose.

In this discourse, I wish to show that the character of Christ, taken as a whole, is one which could not have entered the thoughts of man, could not have been imagined or feigned; that it bears every mark of genuineness and truth; that it ought therefore to be acknowledged as real and of divine original.

It is all-important, my friends, if we would feel the force of this argument, to transport ourselves to the times when Jesus lived. We are very apt to think, that he was moving about in such a city as this, or among a people agreeing with ourselves in modes of thinking and habits of life. But the truth is, he lived in a state of society singularly remote from our own. Of all nations, the Jewish was the most strongly marked. The Jew hardly felt himself to belong to the human family. He was accustomed to speak of himself as chosen by God, holy, clean; whilst the Gentiles were sinners, dogs, polluted, unclean. His common dress, the phylactery on his brow or arm, the hem of his garment, his food, the ordinary circumstances of his life, as well as his temple, his sacrifices, his ablutions, all held him up to himself, as a peculiar favorite of God, and all separated him from the rest of the world. With other nations he could not eat or marry. They

were unworthy of his communion. Still, with all these notions of superiority, he saw himself conquered by those whom he despised. He was obliged to wear the shackles of Rome, to see Roman legions in his territory, a Roman guard near his temple, and a Roman tax-gatherer extorting, for the support of an idolatrous government and an idolatrous worship, what he regarded as due only to God. The hatred which burned in the breast of the Jew towards his foreign oppressor, perhaps never glowed with equal intenseness in any other conquered state. He had, however, his secret consolation. The time was near, the prophetic age was at hand, when Judea was to break her chains and rise from the dust. Her long-promised king and deliverer was near, and was coming to wear the crown of universal empire. From Jerusalem was to go forth his law, and all nations were to serve the chosen people of God. To this conqueror the Jews indeed ascribed the office of promoting religion; but the religion of Moses, corrupted into an outward service, was to them the perfection of human nature. They clung to its forms with the whole energy of their souls. To the Mosaic institution, they ascribed their distinction from all other nations. It lay at the foundation of their hopes of dominion. I believe no strength of prejudice ever equalled the intense attachment of the Jew to his peculiar national religion. You may judge of its power by the fact of its having been transmitted through so many ages, amidst persecution and sufferings which would have subdued any spirit but that of a Jew. You must bring these things to your mind. You must place yourselves in the midst of this singular people.

Among this singular people, burning with impatient

expectation, appeared Jesus of Nazareth. His first words were, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." These words we hear with little emotion; but to the Jews, who had been watching for this kingdom for ages, and who were looking for its immediate manifestation, they must have been awakening as an earthquake. Accordingly we find Jesus thronged by multitudes which no building could contain. He repairs to a mountain, as affording him advantages for addressing the crowd. I see them surrounding him with eager looks, and ready to drink in every word from his lips. And what do I hear? Not one word of Judea, of Rome, of freedom, of conquest, of the glories of God's chosen people, and of the thronging of all nations to the temple on Mount Zion. Almost every word was a death-blow to the hopes and feelings, which glowed through the whole people, and were consecrated under the name of religion. He speaks of the long-expected Kingdom of Heaven; but speaks of it as a felicity promised to, and only to be partaken by, the humble and pure in heart. The righteousness of the Pharisees, that which was deemed the perfection of religion, and which the new deliverer was expected to spread far and wide, he pronounces worthless, and declares the kingdom of Heaven, or of the Messiah, to be shut against all who do not cultivate a new, spiritual, and disinterested virtue. Instead of war and victory, he commands his impatient hearers to love, to forgive, to bless their enemies; and holds forth this spirit of benignity, mercy, peace, as the special badge of the people of the true Messiah. Instead of national interests and glories, he commands them to seek first a spirit of impartial charity and love, unconfined by the

bounds of tribe or nation, and proclaims this to be the happiness and honor of the reign for which they hoped. Instead of this world's riches, which they expected to flow from all lands into their own, he commands them to lay up treasures in heaven, and directs them to an incorruptible, immortal life, as the true end of their being. / Nor is this all. He does not merely offer himself as a spiritual deliverer, as the founder of a new empire of inward piety and universal charity; he closes with language announcing a more mysterious office. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Here I meet the annunciation of a character as august as it must have been startling. I hear him foretelling a dominion to be exercised in the future world. He begins to announce, what entered largely into his future teaching, that his power was not bounded to this earth. These words I better understand, when I hear him subsequently declaring, that, after a painful death, he was to rise again and ascend to heaven, and there, in a state of preëminent power and glory, was to be the advocate and judge of the human race.

Such are some of the views given by Jesus, of his character and reign, in the Sermon on the Mount. Immediately afterwards, I hear another lesson from him, bringing out some of these truths still more strongly. A Roman centurion makes application to him for the cure of a servant, whom he particularly valued; and on expressing, in a strong manner, his conviction of the power of Jesus to heal at a distance, Jesus, according

to the historian, "marvelled, and said to those that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith in Israel; and I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom" (that is, the Jews) "shall be cast out." Here all the hopes which the Jews had cherished of an exclusive or peculiar possession of the Messiah's kingdom, were crushed; and the reception of the despised Gentile world to all his blessings, or, in other words, the extension of his pure religion to the ends of the earth, began to be proclaimed.

Here I pause for the present, and I ask you, whether the character of Jesus be not the most extraordinary in history, and wholly inexplicable on human principles. Review the ground over which we have gone. Recollect that he was born and grew up a Jew, in the midst of Jews, a people burning with one passion, and throwing their whole souls into the expectation of a national and earthly deliverer. He grew up among them in poverty, seclusion, and labors fitted to contract his thoughts, purposes, and hopes; and yet we find him escaping every influence of education and society. We find him as untouched by the feelings which prevailed universally around him, which religion and patriotism concurred to consecrate, which the mother breathed into the ear of the child, and which the teacher of the synagogue strengthened in the adult, as if he had been brought up in another world. We find him conceiving a sublime purpose, such as had never dawned on sage or hero, and see him possessed with a consciousness of sustaining a relation to God and mankind, and of being invested with powers in this world and the world to come, such as had never en-

tered the human mind. Whence now, I ask, came the conception of this character?

Will any say it had its origin in imposture; that it was a fabrication of a deceiver? I answer, the character claimed by Christ excludes this supposition, by its very nature. It was so remote from all the ideas and anticipations of the times, so unfit to awaken sympathy, so unattractive to the heathen, so exasperating to the Jew, that it was the last to enter the mind of an impostor. A deceiver of the dullest vision must have foreseen, that it would expose him to bitter scorn, abhorrence, and persecution, and that he would be left to carry on his work alone, just as Jesus always stood alone, and could find not an individual to enter into his spirit and design. What allurements an unprincipled, self-seeking man could find to such an enterprise, no common ingenuity can discover.

I affirm next, that the sublimity of the character claimed by Christ forbids us to trace it to imposture. That a selfish, designing, depraved mind could have formed the idea and purpose of a work unparalleled in beneficence, in vastness, and in moral grandeur, would certainly be a strange departure from the laws of the human mind. I add, that if an impostor could have lighted on the conception of so sublime and wonderful a work as that claimed by Jesus, he could not, I say, he *could* not have thrown into his personation of it the air of truth and reality. The part would have been too high for him. He would have overacted it or fallen short of it perpetually. His true character would have rebelled against his assumed one. We should have seen something strained, forced, artificial, awkward, showing that he was not in his true sphere. To act up to a character so sin-

gular and grand, and one for which no precedent could be found, seems to me utterly impossible for a man who had not the true spirit of it, or who was only wearing it as a mask.

Now, how stands the case with Jesus? Bred a Jewish peasant or carpenter, he issues from obscurity, and claims for himself a divine office, a superhuman dignity, such as had not been imagined; and in no instance does he fall below the character. The peasant, and still more the Jew, wholly disappears. We feel that a new being, of a new order of mind, is taking a part in human affairs. There is a native tone of grandeur and authority in his teaching. He speaks as a being related to the whole human race. His mind never shrinks within the ordinary limits of human agency. A narrower sphere than the world never enters his thoughts. He speaks in a natural, spontaneous style, of accomplishing the most arduous and important change in human affairs. This unlabored manner of expressing great thoughts is particularly worthy of attention. You never hear from Jesus that swelling, pompous, ostentatious language, which almost necessarily springs from an attempt to sustain a character above our powers. He talks of his glories as one to whom they were familiar, and of his intimacy and oneness with God, as simply as a child speaks of his connexion with his parents. He speaks of saving and judging the world, of drawing all men to himself, and of giving everlasting life, as we speak of the ordinary powers which we exert. He makes no set harangues about the grandeur of his office and character. His consciousness of it gives a hue to his whole language, breaks out in indirect, undesigned expressions, showing that it was the deepest and most familiar of his convictions. This ar-

gument is only to be understood by reading the Gospels with a wakeful mind and heart. It does not lie on their surface, and it is the stronger for lying beneath it. When I read these books with care, when I trace the unaffected majesty which runs through the life of Jesus, and see him never falling below his sublime claims amidst poverty, and scorn, and in his last agony ; I have a feeling of the reality of his character which I cannot express. I feel that the Jewish carpenter could no more have conceived and sustained this character under motives of imposture, than an infant's arm could repeat the deeds of Hercules, or his unawakened intellect comprehend and rival the matchless works of genius.

Am I told that the claims of Jesus had their origin, not in imposture but in enthusiasm ; that the imagination, kindled by strong feeling, overpowered the judgment so far as to give him the notion of being destined to some strange and unparalleled work ? I know that enthusiasm, or a kindled imagination, has great power ; and we are never to lose sight of it, in judging of the claims of religious teachers. But I say first, that, except in cases where it amounts to insanity, enthusiasm works, in a greater or less degree, according to a man's previous conceptions and modes of thought. In Judea, where the minds of men were burning with feverish expectation of a Messiah, I can easily conceive of a Jew imagining that in himself this ardent conception, this ideal of glory, was to be realized. I can conceive of his seating himself in fancy on the throne of David, and secretly pondering the means of his appointed triumphs. But that a Jew should fancy himself the Messiah, and at the same time should strip that character of all the attributes which had fired his youthful imagination and heart, — that he

should start aside from all the feelings and hopes of his age, and should acquire a consciousness of being destined to a wholly new career, and one as unbounded as it was new, this is exceedingly improbable; and one thing is certain, that an imagination so erratic, so ungoverned, and able to generate the conviction of being destined to a work so immeasurably disproportioned to the power of the individual, must have partaken of insanity. Now, is it conceivable, that an individual, mastered by so wild and fervid an imagination, should have sustained the dignity claimed by Christ, should have acted worthily the highest part ever assumed on earth? Would not his enthusiasm have broken out amidst the peculiar excitements of the life of Jesus, and have left a touch of madness on his teaching and conduct? Is it to such a man that we should look for the inculcation of a new and perfect form of virtue, and for the exemplification of humanity in its fairest form?

The charge of an extravagant, self-deluding enthusiasm is the last to be fastened on Jesus. Where can we find the traces of it in his history? Do we detect them in the calm authority of his precepts; in the mild, practical, and beneficent spirit of his religion; in the unlabored simplicity of the language with which he unfolds his high powers, and the sublime truths of religion; or in the good sense, the knowledge of human nature, which he always discovers in his estimate and treatment of the different classes of men with whom he acted? Do we discover this enthusiasm in the singular fact, that whilst he claimed power in the future world, and always turned men's minds to Heaven, he never indulged his own imagination, or stimulated that of his disciples, by giving vivid pictures, or any minute description, of that unseen

state? The truth is, that, remarkable as was the character of Jesus, it was distinguished by nothing more than by calmness and self-possession. This trait pervades his other excellences. How calm was his piety! Point me, if you can, to one vehement, passionate expression of his religious feelings. Does the Lord's Prayer breathe a feverish enthusiasm? The habitual style of Jesus on the subject of religion, if introduced into many churches of his followers at the present day, would be charged with coldness. The calm and the rational character of his piety is particularly seen in the doctrine which he so earnestly inculcates, that disinterested love and self-denying service to our fellow-creatures are the most acceptable worship we can offer to our Creator. His benevolence, too, though singularly earnest and deep, was composed and serene. He never lost the possession of himself in his sympathy with others; was never hurried into the impatient and rash enterprises of an enthusiastic philanthropy; but did good with the tranquillity and constancy which mark the providence of God. The depth of his calmness may best be understood by considering the opposition made to his claims. His labors were everywhere insidiously watched and industriously thwarted by vindictive foes, who had even conspired to compass, through his death, the ruin of his cause. Now, a feverish enthusiasm, which fancies itself to be intrusted with a great work of God, is singularly liable to impatient indignation under furious and malignant opposition. Obstacles increase its vehemence; it becomes more eager and hurried in the accomplishment of its purposes, in proportion as they are withstood. Be it therefore remembered, that the malignity of Christ's foes, though never surpassed, and for the time triumphant, never

robbed him of self-possession, roused no passion, and threw no vehemence or precipitation into his exertions. He did not disguise from himself or his followers the impression made on the multitude by his adversaries. He distinctly foresaw the violent death towards which he was fast approaching. Yet, confiding in God, and in the silent progress of his truth, he possessed his soul in peace. Not only was he calm, but his calmness rises into sublimity when we consider the storms which raged around him, and the vastness of the prospects in which his spirit found repose. I say, then, that serenity and self-possession were peculiarly the attributes of Jesus. I affirm, that the singular and sublime character claimed by Jesus, can be traced neither to imposture, nor to an ungoverned, insane imagination. It can only be accounted for by its truth, its reality.

I began with observing how our long familiarity with Jesus blunts our minds to his singular excellence. We probably have often read of the character which he claimed, without a thought of its extraordinary nature. But I know nothing so sublime. The plans and labors of statesmen sink into the sports of children, when compared with the work which Jesus announced, and to which he devoted himself in life and death, with a thorough consciousness of its reality. The idea of changing the moral aspect of the whole earth, of recovering all nations to the pure and inward worship of one God, and to a spirit of divine and fraternal love, was one of which we meet not a trace in philosopher or legislator before him. The human mind had given no promise of this extent of view. The conception of this enterprise, and the calm, unshaken expectation of success, in one who had no station and no wealth, who

cast from him the sword with abhorrence, and who forbade his disciples to use any weapons but those of love, discover a wonderful trust in the power of God and the power of love; and when to this we add, that Jesus looked not only to the triumph of his pure faith in the present world, but to a mighty and beneficent power in Heaven, we witness a vastness of purpose, a grandeur of thought and feeling, so original, so superior to the workings of all other minds, that nothing but our familiarity can prevent our contemplation of it with wonder and profound awe. I confess, when I can escape the deadening power of habit, and can receive the full import of such passages as the following, — "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," — "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost," — "He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father in Heaven," — "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me before men, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of the Father with the holy angels," — "In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you:" — I say, when I can succeed in realizing the import of such passages, I feel myself listening to a being, such as never before and never since spoke in human language. I am awed by the consciousness of greatness which these simple words express; and when I connect this greatness with the proofs of Christ's miracles which I gave you in a former discourse, I am compelled to exclaim with the centurion, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

I have thus, my friends, set before you one view of Jesus Christ, which shows him to have been the most

extraordinary being who ever lived. I invite your attention to another; and I am not sure, but that it is still more striking. You have seen the consciousness of greatness which Jesus possessed; I now ask you to consider, how, with this consciousness, he lived among men. To convey my meaning more distinctly, let me avail myself of an imaginary case. Suppose you had never heard the particulars of Christ's history, but were told in general, that, ages ago, an extraordinary man appeared in the world, whose mind was wholly possessed with the idea of having come from God, who regarded himself as clothed with divine power and charged with the sublimest work in the universe, who had the consciousness of sustaining a relation of unexampled authority and beneficence, not to one nation or age, but to all nations and all times, — and who anticipated a spiritual kingdom and everlasting power beyond the grave. Suppose you should be told, that, on entering the world, he found not one mind able to comprehend his views, and felt himself immeasurably exalted in thought and purpose above all around him, and suppose you should then be asked what appearance, what mode of life, what tone, what air, what deportment, what intercourse with the multitude seemed to you to suit such a character, and were probably adopted by him; how would you represent him to your minds? Would you not suppose, that, with this peculiar character, he adopted some peculiar mode of life, expressive of his superiority to and separation from all other men? Would you not expect something distinctive in his appearance? Would you not expect him to assume some badge, and to exact some homage? Would you not expect, that, with a mind revolving such vast thoughts, and raised

above the earth, he would look coldly on the ordinary gratifications of men? that, with a mind spreading itself over the world, and meditating its subjection to his truth, he would take little interest in ordinary individuals? and that, possessing, in his own doctrine and character, a standard of sublime virtue, he would attach little importance to the low attainments of the ignorant and superstitious around him? Would you not make him a public character, and expect to see him laboring to establish his ascendency among public men? Would you not expect to see his natural affections absorbed in his universal philanthropy; and would not private attachments seem to you quite inconsistent with his vast superiority, and the immensity of his purposes? Would you not expect him to avail himself of the best accommodations the world could afford? Would you not expect the great Teacher to select the most sacred spots for his teaching, and the Lord of all to erect some conspicuous seat, from which should go forth the laws which were to reach the ends of the earth? Would you not, in a word, expect this extraordinary personage to surround himself with extraordinary circumstances, and to maintain a separation from the degraded multitude around him?

Such, I believe, would be the expectation of us all; and what was the case with Jesus? Read his history. He comes with the consciousness of more than human greatness, to accomplish an infinite work; and where do you find him? What is his look? what his manner? How does he converse, how live with men? His appearance, mode of life, and intercourse are directly the reverse of what we should have supposed. He comes in the ordinary dress of the class of society in which he

nad grown up. He retreats to no solitude, like John, to strike awe, nor seeks any spot which had been consecrated in Jewish history. Would you find him? Go to the house of Peter, the fisherman. Go to the well of Samaria, where he rests after the fatigues of his journey. Would you hear him teach? You may find him, indeed, sometimes in the temple, for that was a place of general resort; but commonly you may find him instructing in the open air, now from a boat on the Galilean lake, now on a mount, and now in the streets of the crowded city. He has no place wherein to lay his head, nor will he have one. A rich ruler comes and falls at his feet. He says, "Go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and then come and follow me." Nor was this all. Something more striking remains to be told. He did not merely live in the streets, and in the houses of fishermen. In these places, had he pleased, he might have cleared a space around him, and raised a barrier between himself and others. But in these places, and everywhere, he lived with men as a man, a brother, a friend, sometimes a servant; and entered, with a deep, unexampled sympathy, into the feelings, interests, wants, sorrows of individuals, of ordinary men, and even of the most depressed, despised, and forsaken of the race. Here is the most striking view of Jesus. This combination of the spirit of humanity, in its lowliest, tenderest form, with the consciousness of unrivalled and divine glories, is the most wonderful distinction of this wonderful character. Here we learn the chief reason, why he chose poverty, and refused every peculiarity of manner and appearance. He did this because he desired to come near to the multitude of men, to make himself accessible to all, to

pour out the fullness of his sympathy upon all, to know and weep over their sorrows and sins, and to manifest his interest in their affections and joys.

I can offer but a few instances of this sympathy of Christ with human nature in all its varieties of character and condition. But how beautiful are they! At the very opening of his ministry, we find him present at a marriage, to which he and his disciples had been called. Among the Jews this was an occasion of peculiar exhilaration and festivity; but Jesus did not therefore decline it. He knew what affections, joys, sorrows, and moral influences are bound up in this institution, and he went to the celebration, not as an ascetic, to frown on its bright hopes and warm congratulations, but to sanction it by his presence, and to heighten its enjoyments. How little does this comport with the solitary dignity which we should have pronounced most accordant with his character, and what a spirit of humanity does it breathe! But this event stands almost alone in his history. His chief sympathy was not with them that rejoice, but with the ignorant, sinful, sorrowful; and with these we find him cultivating an habitual intimacy. Though so exalted in thought and purpose, he chose uneducated men to be his chief disciples; and he lived with them, not as a superior, giving occasional and formal instruction, but became their companion, travelled with them on foot, slept in their dwellings, sat at their tables, partook their plain fare, communicated to them his truth in the simplest form; and though they constantly misunderstood him, and never received his full meaning, he was never wearied with teaching them. So familiar was his intercourse, that we find Peter reproving him with an affectionate zeal, for an-

nouncing his approaching death, and we find John leaning on his bosom. Of his last discourse to these disciples I need not speak. It stands alone among all writings for the union of tenderness and majesty. His own sorrows are forgotten in his solicitude to speak peace and comfort to his humble followers.

The depth of his human sympathies was beautifully manifested when children were brought to him. His disciples, judging as all men would judge, thought that he who was sent to wear the crown of universal empire, had too great a work before him to give his time and attention to children, and reproved the parents who brought them; but Jesus, rebuking his disciples, called to him the children. Never, I believe, did childhood awaken such deep love as at that moment. He took them in his arms and blessed them, and not only said that "of such was the kingdom of heaven," but added, "He that receiveth a little child in my name, receiveth me;" so entirely did he identify himself with this primitive, innocent, beautiful form of human nature.

There was no class of human beings so low as to be beneath his sympathy. He not merely taught the publican and sinner, but, with all his consciousness of purity, sat down and dined with them, and, when reproved by the malignant Pharisee for such companionship, answered by the touching parables of the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son, and said, "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost."

No personal suffering dried up this fountain of love in his breast. On his way to the cross, he heard some women of Jerusalem bewailing him, and at the sound, forgetting his own grief, he turned to them and said,

"Women of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children." On the cross, whilst his mind was divided between intense suffering, and the contemplation of the infinite blessings in which his sufferings were to issue, his eye lighted on his mother and John, and the sensibilities of a son and a friend mingled with the sublime consciousness of the universal Lord and Saviour. Never before did natural affection find so tender and beautiful an utterance. To his mother he said, directing her to John, "*Behold thy son;* I leave my beloved disciple to take my place, to perform my filial offices, and to enjoy a share of that affection with which you have followed me through life;" and to John he said, "*Behold thy mother;* I bequeath to you the happiness of ministering to my dearest earthly friend." Nor is this all. The spirit of humanity had one higher triumph. Whilst his enemies surrounded him with a malignity unsoftened by his last agonies, and, to give the keenest edge to insult, reminded him scoffingly of the high character and office which he had claimed, his only notice of them was the prayer, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

Thus Jesus lived with men; with the consciousness of unutterable majesty, he joined a lowliness, gentleness, humanity, and sympathy, which have no example in human history. I ask you to contemplate this wonderful union. In proportion to the superiority of Jesus to all around him, was the intimacy, the brotherly love, with which he bound himself to them. I maintain, that this is a character wholly remote from human conception. To imagine it to be the production of imposture or enthusiasm, shows a strange unsoundness

of mind. I contemplate it with a veneration second only to the profound awe with which I look up to God. It bears no mark of human invention. It was real. It belonged to and it manifested the beloved Son of God.

But I have not done. May I ask your attention a few moments more? We have not yet reached the depth of Christ's character. We have not touched the great principle, on which his wonderful sympathy was founded, and which endeared to him his office of universal Saviour. Do you ask what this deep principle was? I answer, it was his conviction of the greatness of the human soul. He saw in man the impress and image of the divinity, and therefore thirsted for his redemption, and took the tenderest interest in him, whatever might be the rank, character, or condition in which he was found. This spiritual view of man pervades and distinguishes the teaching of Christ. Jesus looked on men with an eye which pierced beneath the material frame. The body vanished before him. The trappings of the rich, the rags of the poor, were nothing to him. He looked through them, as though they did not exist, to the soul; and there, amidst clouds of ignorance and plague-spots of sin, he recognised a spiritual and immortal nature, and the germs of power and perfection which might be unfolded for ever. In the most fallen and depraved man, he saw a being who might become an angel of light. Still more, he felt that there was nothing in himself to which men might not ascend. His own lofty consciousness did not sever him from the multitude; for he saw in his own greatness the model of what men might

become. So deeply was he thus impressed, that again and again, in speaking of his future glories, he announced, that in these his true followers were to share. They were to sit on his throne, and partake of his beneficent power.

Here I pause, and indeed I know not what can be added to heighten the wonder, reverence, and love, which are due to Jesus. When I consider him, not only as possessed with the consciousness of an unexampled and unbounded majesty, but as recognising a kindred nature in human beings, and living and dying to raise them to a participation of his divine glories; and when I see him under these views allying himself to men by the tenderest ties, embracing them with a spirit of humanity, which no insult, injury, or pain could for a moment repel or overpower, I am filled with wonder as well as reverence and love. I feel that this character is not of human invention, that it was not assumed through fraud, or struck out by enthusiasm; for it is infinitely above their reach. When I add this character of Jesus to the other evidences of his religion, it gives to what before seemed so strong, a new and a vast accession of strength; I feel as if I could not be deceived. The Gospels must be true; they were drawn from a living original; they were founded on reality. The character of Jesus is not a fiction; he was what he claimed to be, and what his followers attested. Nor is this all. Jesus not only *was*, he is still, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. He exists now; he has entered that Heaven, to which he always looked forward on earth. There he lives and reigns. With a clear, calm faith, I see him in that state of glory; and I confidently expect,

at no distant period, to see him face to face. We have indeed no absent friend whom we shall so surely meet. Let us then, my hearers, by imitation of his virtues and obedience to his word, prepare ourselves to join him in those pure mansions, where he is surrounding himself with the good and pure of our race, and will communicate to them for ever his own spirit, power, and joy.

CHRISTIANITY A RATIONAL RELIGION.

ROMANS i. 16: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."

SUCH was the language of Paul; and every man will respond to it, who comprehends the character and has felt the influence of Christianity. In a former discourse, I proposed to state to you some reasons for adopting as our own the words of the Apostle, for joining in this open and resolute testimony to the gospel of Christ. I observed, that I was not ashamed of the gospel, first because it is True, and to this topic the discourse was devoted. I wish now to continue the subject, and to state another ground of undisguised and unshaken adherence to Christianity. I say, then, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because it is a *rational* religion. It agrees with reason; therefore I count it worthy of acceptation, therefore I do not blush to enrol myself among its friends and advocates. The object of the present discourse will be the illustration of this claim of Christianity. I wish to show you the harmony which subsists between the light of God's word, and that primitive light of reason, which he has kindled within us to be our perpetual guide. If, in treating this subject, I shall come into conflict with any

class of Christians, I trust I shall not be considered as imputing to them any moral or intellectual defect. I judge men by their motives, dispositions, and lives, and not by their speculations or peculiar opinions; and I esteem piety and virtue equally venerable, whether found in friend or foe.

Christianity is a Rational religion. Were it not so, I should be ashamed to profess it. I am aware that it is the fashion with some to decry reason, and to set up revelation as an opposite authority. This error though countenanced by good men, and honestly maintained for the defence of the Christian cause, ought to be earnestly withstood; for it virtually surrenders our religion into the hands of the unbeliever. It saps the foundation to strengthen the building. It places our religion in hostility to human nature, and gives to its adversaries the credit of vindicating the rights and noblest powers of the mind.

We must never forget that our rational nature is the greatest gift of God. For this we owe him our chief gratitude. It is a greater gift than any outward aid or benefaction, and no doctrine which degrades it can come from its Author. The developement of it is the end of our being. Revelation is but a means, and is designed to concur with nature, providence, and God's spirit, in carrying forward reason to its perfection. I glory in Christianity because it enlarges, invigorates, exalts my rational nature. If I could not be a Christian without ceasing to be rational, I should not hesitate as to my choice. I feel myself bound to sacrifice to Christianity property, reputation, life; but I ought not to sacrifice to any religion, that reason which lifts me above the brute and constitutes me a man. I can con-

ceive no sacrilege greater than to prostrate or renounce the highest faculty which we have derived from God. In so doing we should offer violence to the divinity within us. Christianity wages no war with reason, but is one with it, and is given to be its helper and friend.

I wish, in the present discourse, to illustrate and confirm the views now given. My remarks will be arranged under two heads. I propose, first, to show that Christianity is founded on, and supposes, the authority of reason, and cannot therefore oppose it without subverting itself. My object in this part of the discourse will be to expose the error of those who hope to serve revelation by disparaging reason. I shall then, in the second place, compare Christianity and the light of reason, to show their accordance; and shall prove, by descending to particulars, that Christianity is eminently a rational religion. My aim, under this head, will be to vindicate the Gospel from the reproaches of the unbeliever, and to strengthen the faith and attachment of its friends. — Before I begin, let me observe that this discussion, from the nature of the subject, must assume occasionally an abstract form, and will demand serious attention. I am to speak of Reason, the chief faculty of the mind; and no simplicity of language in treating such a topic can exempt the hearer from the necessity of patient effort of thought.

I am to begin with showing that the Christian revelation is founded on the authority of reason, and consequently cannot oppose it; and here it may be proper to settle the meaning of the word Reason. One of the most important steps towards the truth is to determine the import of terms. Very often fierce controversies have sprung from obscurity of language, and the parties,

on explaining themselves, have discovered that they have been spending their strength in a war of words. What, then, is reason?

The term Reason is used with so much latitude, that to fix its precise limits is not an easy task. In this respect it agrees with the other words which express the intellectual faculties. One idea, however, is always attached to it. All men understand by reason the highest faculty or energy of the mind. Without laboring for a philosophical definition that will comprehend all its exercises, I shall satisfy myself with pointing out two of its principal characteristics or functions.

First, it belongs to reason to comprehend Universal truths. This is among its most important offices. There are particular and there are universal truths. The last are the noblest, and the capacity of perceiving them is the distinction of intelligent beings; and these belong to reason. Let me give my meaning by some illustrations. I see a stone falling to the ground. This is a particular truth; but I do not stop here. I believe that not only this particular stone falls towards the earth, but that every particle of matter, in whatever world, tends, or, as is sometimes said, is attracted towards all other matter. Here is a universal truth, a principle extending to the whole material creation, and essential to its existence. This truth belongs to reason. — Again, I see a man producing some effect, a manufacture, a house. Here is a particular truth. But I am not only capable of seeing particular causes and effects; I am sure that every thing which begins to exist, no matter when or where, must have a cause, that no change ever has taken place or ever will take place without a cause. Here is a universal truth, something

true here and everywhere, true now and through eternity; and this truth belongs to reason. — Again, I see with my eyes, I traverse with my hands, a limited space; but this is not all. I am sure, that, beyond the limits which my limbs or senses reach, there is an unbounded space; that, go where I will, an infinity will spread around me. Here is another universal truth, and this belongs to reason. The idea of Infinity is indeed one of the noblest conceptions of this faculty. — Again, I see a man conferring a good on another. Here is a particular truth or perception. But my mind is not confined to this. I see and feel that it is right for all intelligent beings, exist when or where they may, to do good, and wrong for them to seek the misery of others. Here is a universal truth, a law extending from God to the lowest human being; and this belongs to reason. I trust I have conveyed to you my views in regard to the first characteristic of this highest power of the soul. Its office is to discern universal truths, great and eternal principles. But it does not stop here. Reason is also exercised in applying these universal truths to particular cases, beings, events. For example, reason teaches me, as we have seen, that all changes without exception require a cause; and in conformity to this principle, it prompts me to seek the particular causes of the endless changes and appearances which fall under my observation. Thus reason is perpetually at work on the ideas furnished us by the senses by consciousness, by memory, associating them with its own great truths, or investing them with its own universality.

I now proceed to the second function of reason, which is indeed akin to the first. Reason is the power which tends, and is perpetually striving, to reduce our various

thoughts to Unity or Consistency. Perhaps the most fundamental conviction of reason is, that all truths agree together; that inconsistency is the mark of error. Its intensest, most earnest effort is to bring concord into the intellect, to reconcile what seem to be clashing views. On the observation of a new fact, reason strives to incorporate it with former knowledge. It can allow nothing to stand separate in the mind. It labors to bring together scattered truths, and to give them the strength and beauty of a vital order. Its end and delight is harmony. It is shocked by an inconsistency in belief, just as a fine ear is wounded by a discord. It carries within itself an instinctive consciousness, that all things which exist are intimately bound together; and it cannot rest until it has connected whatever we witness with the infinite whole. Reason, according to this view, is the most glorious form or exercise of the intellectual nature. It corresponds to the unity of God and the universe, and seeks to make the soul the image and mirror of this sublime unity.

I have thus given my views of reason; but, to prevent all perversion, before I proceed to the main discussion, let me offer a word or two more of explanation. In this discourse, when I speak of the accordance of revelation with reason, I suppose this faculty to be used deliberately, conscientiously, and with the love of truth. Men often baptize with the name of reason their prejudices, unexamined notions, or opinions adopted through interest, pride, or other unworthy biasses. It is not uncommon to hear those who sacrifice the plainest dictates of the rational nature to impulse and passion, setting themselves up as oracles of reason. Now when I say revelation must accord with reason, I do not mean by the term the

corrupt and superficial opinions of men who have betrayed and debased their rational powers. I mean reason, calmly, honestly exercised for the acquisition of truth and the invigoration of virtue.

After these explanations, I proceed to the discussion of the two leading principles to which this Discourse is devoted.

First, I am to show that revelation is founded on the authority of reason, and cannot therefore oppose or disparage it without subverting itself. Let me state a few of the considerations which convince me of the truth of this position. The first is, that reason alone makes us capable of receiving a revelation. It must previously exist and operate, or we should be wholly unprepared for the communications of Christ. Revelation, then, is built on reason. You will see the truth of these remarks if you will consider to whom revelation is sent. Why is it given to men rather than to brutes? Why have not God's messengers gone to the fields to proclaim his glad tidings to bird and beast? The answer is obvious. These want reason; and, wanting this, they have no capacity or preparation for revealed truth. And not only would revelation be lost on the brute; let it speak to the child, before his rational faculties have been awakened, and before some ideas of duty and his own nature have been developed, and it might as well speak to a stone. Reason is the preparation and ground of revelation.

This truth will be still more obvious, if we consider, not only to whom, but in what way, the Christian revelation is communicated. How is it conveyed? In words. Did it make these words? No. They were in use ages before its birth. Again I ask, Did it make the ideas or

thoughts which these words express? No. If the hearers of Jesus had not previously attached ideas to the terms which he employed, they could not have received his meaning. He might as well have spoken to them in a foreign tongue. Thus the ideas which enter into Christianity subsisted before. They were ideas of reason; so that to this faculty revelation owes the materials of which it is composed.

Revelation, we must remember, is not our earliest teacher. Man is not born with the single power of reading God's word, and sent immediately to that guide. His eyes open first on another volume, that of the creation. Long before he can read the Bible, he looks round on the earth and sky. He reads the countenances of his friends, and hears and understands their voices. He looks, too, by degrees within himself, and acquires some ideas of his own soul. Thus his first school is that of nature and reason, and this is necessary to prepare him for a communication from Heaven. Revelation does not find the mind a blank, a void, prepared to receive unresistingly whatever may be offered; but finds it in possession of various knowledge from nature and experience, and, still more, in possession of great principles, fundamental truths, moral ideas, which are derived from itself, and which are the germs of all its future improvement. This last view is peculiarly important. The mind does not receive every thing from abroad. Its great ideas arise from itself, and by those native lights it reads and comprehends the volumes of nature and revelation. We speak, indeed, of nature and revelation as making known to us an intelligent First Cause; but the ideas of intelligence and causation we derive originally from our own nature. The elements of the idea of God

we gather from ourselves. Power, wisdom, love, virtue, beauty, and happiness, words which contain all that is glorious in the universe and interesting in our existence, express attributes of the mind, and are understood by us only through consciousness. It is true, these ideas or principles of reason are often obscured by thick clouds, and mingled with many and deplorable errors. Still they are never lost. Christianity recognises them, is built on them, and needs them as its interpreters. If an illustration of these views be required, I would point you to what may be called the most fundamental idea of religion. I mean the idea of right, of duty. Do we derive this originally and wholly from sacred books? Has not every human being, whether born within or beyond the bounds of revelation, a sense of the distinction between right and wrong? Is there not an earlier voice than revelation, approving or rebuking men according to their deeds? In barbarous ages is not conscience heard? And does it not grow more articulate with the progress of society? Christianity does not create, but presupposes the idea of duty; and the same may be said of other great convictions. Revelation, then, does not stand alone, nor is it addressed to a blank and passive mind. It was meant to be a joint worker with other teachers, with nature, with Providence, with conscience, with our rational powers; and as these all are given us by God, they cannot differ from each other. God must agree with himself. He has but one voice. It is man who speaks with jarring tongues. Nothing but harmony can come from the Creator; and, accordingly, a religion claiming to be from God, can give no surer proof of falsehood than by contradicting those previous truths which God is teaching by our very nature. We have

thus seen that reason prepares us for a divine communication, and that it furnishes the ideas or materials of which revelation consists. This is my first consideration.

I proceed to a second. I affirm, then, that revelation rests on the authority of reason, because to this faculty it submits the evidences of its truth, and nothing but the approving sentence of reason binds us to receive and obey it. This is a very weighty consideration. Christianity, in placing itself before the tribunal of reason and in resting its claims on the sanction of this faculty, is one of the chief witnesses to the authority and dignity of our rational nature. That I have ascribed to this faculty its true and proper office, may be easily made to appear. I take the New Testament in hand, and on what ground do I receive its truths as divine? I see nothing on its pages but the same letters in which other books are written. No miraculous voice from Heaven assures me that it is God's word, nor does any mysterious voice within my soul command me to believe the supernatural works of Christ. How, then, shall I settle the question of the origin of this religion? I must examine it by the same rational faculties by which other subjects are tried. I must ask what are its evidences, and I must lay them before reason, the only power by which evidence can be weighed. I have not a distinct faculty given me for judging a revelation. I have not two understandings, one for inquiring into God's word and another into his works. As with the same bodily eye I now look on the earth, now on the heavens, so with the same power of reason I examine now nature, now revelation. Reason must collect and weigh the various proofs of Christianity. It must especially compare this system with those great

moral convictions, which are written by the finger of God on the heart, and which make man a law to himself. A religion subverting these, it must not hesitate to reject, be its evidences what they may. A religion, for example, commanding us to hate and injure society, reason must instantly discard, without even waiting to examine its proofs. From these views we learn, not only that it is the province of reason to judge of the truth of Christianity, but, what is still more important, that the rules or tests by which it judges are of its own dictation. The laws which it applies in this case have their origin in itself. No one will pretend, that revelation can prescribe the principles by which the question of its own truth should be settled; for, until proved to be true, it has no authority. Reason must prescribe the tests or standards, to which a professed communication from God should be referred; and among these none are more important than that moral law, which belongs to the very essence, and is the deepest conviction, of the rational nature. Revelation, then, rests on reason, and, in opposing it, would act for its own destruction.

I have given two views. I have shown that revelation draws its ideas or materials from reason, and that it appeals to this power as the judge of its truth. I now assert, thirdly, that it rests on the authority of reason, because it needs and expects this faculty to be its interpreter, and without this aid would be worse than useless. How is the right of interpretation, the real meaning, of Scriptures to be ascertained? I answer, By reason. I know of no process by which the true sense of the New Testament is to pass from the page into my mind without the use of my rational faculties. It will not be pre-

tended that this book is so exceedingly plain, its words so easy, its sentences so short, its meaning so exposed on the surface, that the whole truth may be received in a moment and without any intellectual effort. There is no such miraculous simplicity in the Scriptures. In truth, no book can be written so simply as to need no exercise of reason. Almost every word has more than one meaning, and judgment is required to select the particular sense intended by the writer. Of all books, perhaps the Scriptures need most the use of reason for their just interpretation; and this, not from any imperfection, but from the strength, boldness, and figurative character of their style, and from the distance of the time when they were written. I open the New Testament and my eye lights on this passage; "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee." Is this language to be interpreted in its plainest and most obvious sense? Then I must mutilate my body, and become a suicide. I look again, and I find Jesus using these words to the Jews; "Fill ye up the measure of your iniquities." Am I to interpret this according to the letter, or the first ideas which it suggests? Then Jesus commanded his hearers to steep themselves in crime, and was himself a minister of sin. It is only by a deliberate use of reason, that we can penetrate beneath the figurative, hyperbolical, and often obscure style of the New Testament, to the real meaning. Let me go to the Bible, dismissing my reason and taking the first impression which the words convey, and there is no absurdity, however gross, into which I shall not fall. I shall ascribe a limited body to God, and unbounded knowledge to man, for I read of God having limbs, and of man knowing all things. Nothing is plainer, than

that I must compare passage with passage, and limit one by another, and especially limit all by those plain and universal principles of reason, which are called common sense, or I shall make revelation the patron of every folly and vice. So essential is reason to the interpretation of the Christian records. Revelation rests upon its authority. Can it then oppose it, or teach us to hold it in light esteem?

I have now furnished the proofs of my first position, that revelation is founded on reason; and in discussing this, I have wished not only to support the main doctrine, but to teach you to reverence, more perhaps than you have done, your rational nature. This has been decried by theologians, until men have ceased to feel its sacredness and dignity. It ought to be regarded as God's greatest gift. It is his image within us. To renounce it would be to offer a cruel violence to ourselves, to take our place among the brutes. Better pluck out the eye, better quench the light of the body, than the light within us. We all feel, that the loss of reason, when produced by disease, is the most terrible calamity of life, and we look on an hospital for the insane as the receptacle for the most pitiable of our race. But, in one view, insanity is not so great an evil as the prostration of reason to a religious sect or a religious chief; for the first is a visitation of Providence, the last is a voluntary act, the work of our own hands.

I am aware, that those who have spoken most contemptuously of human reason, have acted from a good motive; their aim has been to exalt revelation. They have thought that by magnifying this as the only means of divine teaching, they were adding to its dignity. But truth gains nothing by exaggeration; and Christianity,

as we have seen, is undermined by nothing more effectually, than by the sophistry which would bring discredit on our rational powers. Revelation needs no such support. For myself I do not find, that, to esteem Christianity, I must think it the only source of instruction to which I must repair. I need not make nature dumb, to give power or attraction to the teaching of Christ. The last derives new interest and confirmation from its harmony with the first. Christianity would furnish a weapon against itself, not easily repelled, should it claim the distinction of being the only light vouchsafed by God to men; for, in that case, it would represent a vast majority of the human race as left by their Creator without guidance or hope. I believe, and rejoice to believe, that a ray from Heaven descends on the path of every fellow-creature. The heathen, though in darkness when compared with the Christian, has still his light; and it comes from the same source as our own, just as the same sun dispenses, now the faint dawn, and now the perfect day. Let not nature's teaching be disparaged. It is from God as truly as his word. It is sacred, as truly as revelation. Both are manifestations of one infinite mind, and harmonious manifestations; and without this agreement the claims of Christianity could not be sustained.

In offering these remarks, I have not forgotten that they will expose me to the reproach of ministering to "the pride of reason"; and I may be told, that there is no worse form of pride than this. The charge is so common, as to deserve a moment's attention. It will appear at once to be groundless, if you consider, that pride finds its chief nourishment and delight in the idea of our own superiority. It is built on something pecu-

liar and distinctive, on something which separates us from others and raises us above them, and not on powers which we share with all around us. Now, in speaking, as I have done, of the worth and dignity of reason, I have constantly regarded and represented this faculty as the common property of all human beings. I have spoken of its most important truths as universal and unconfined, such as no individual can monopolize or make the grounds of personal distinction or elevation. I have given, then, no occasion and furnished no nutriment to pride. I know, indeed, that the pride of reason or of intellect exists; but how does it chiefly manifest itself? Not in revering that rational nature, which all men have derived from God; but in exaggerating our particular acquisitions or powers, in magnifying our distinctive views, in looking contemptuously on other minds, in making ourselves standards for our brethren, in refusing new lights, and in attempting to establish dominion over the understandings of those who are placed within our influence. Such is the most common form of the pride of intellect. It is a vice confined to no sect, and perhaps will be found to prevail most where it is most disclaimed.

I doubt not that they who insist so continually on the duty of exalting Scripture above reason, consider themselves as particularly secured against the pride of reason. Yet none, I apprehend, are more open to the charge. Such persons are singularly prone to enforce their own interpretations of Scripture on others, and to see peril and crime in the adoption of different views from their own. Now, let me ask, by what power do these men interpret revelation? Is it not by their reason? Have they any faculties but the rational ones, by

which to compare Scripture with Scripture, to explain figurative language, to form conclusions as to the will of God? Do they not employ on God's word the same intellect as on his works? And are not their interpretations of both equally results of reason? It follows, that in imposing on others their explications of the Scriptures, they as truly arrogate to themselves a superiority of reason, as if they should require conformity to their explanations of nature. Nature and Scripture agree in this, that they cannot be understood at a glance. Both volumes demand patient investigation, and task all our powers of thought. Accordingly it is well known, that as much intellectual toil has been spent on theological systems as on the natural sciences; and unhappily it is not less known, that as much intellectual pride has been manifested in framing and defending the first as the last. I fear, indeed, that this vice has clung with peculiar obstinacy to the students of revelation. Nowhere, I fear, have men manifested such infatuated trust in their own infallibility, such overweening fondness for their own conclusions, such positiveness, such impatience of contradiction, such arrogance towards the advocates of different opinions, as in the interpretation of the Scriptures; and yet these very men, who so idolize their own intellectual powers, profess to humble reason, and consider a criminal reliance on it as almost exclusively chargeable on others. The true defence against the pride of reason, is, not to speak of it contemptuously, but to reverence it as God's inestimable gift to every human being, and as given to all for never-ceasing improvements of which we see but the dawn in the present acquisitions of the noblest mind.

I have now completed my views of the first principle, which I laid down in this discourse; namely, that the Christian revelation rests on the authority of reason. Of course, it cannot oppose reason without undermining and destroying itself. I maintain, however, that it does not oppose, that it perfectly accords with reason. It is a rational religion. This is my second great position, and to this I ask your continued attention. This topic might easily be extended to a great length. I might state, in succession, all the principles of Christianity, and show their accordance with reason. But I believe that more general views will be more useful, and such only can be given within the compass of a discourse.

In the account which I gave you of reason, in the beginning of this discourse, I confined myself to two of its functions, namely, its comprehension of universal truths, and the effort it constantly makes to reduce the thoughts to harmony or consistency. Universality and Consistency are among the chief attributes of reason. Do we find these in Christianity? If so, its claim to the character of a rational religion will be established. These tests I will therefore apply to it, and I will begin with Consistency.

That a religion be rational, nothing more is necessary than that its truths should consist or agree with one another, and with all other truths, whether derived from outward nature or our own souls. Now I affirm, that the Christian doctrines have this agreement; and the more we examine, the more brightly this mark of truth will appear. I go to the Gospel, and I first compare its various parts with one another. Among these I find perfect harmony; and what makes this more re-

markable is, that Christianity is not taught systematically, or like a science. Jesus threw out, if I may so speak, his precepts and doctrines incidentally, or as they were required by the occasion, and yet, when they are brought together, they form a harmonious whole. I do not think it necessary to enlarge on this topic, because I believe it is not questioned by infidelity. I will name but one example of this harmony in Christianity. All its doctrines and all its precepts have that species of unity, which is most essential in a religion, that is, they all tend to one object. They all agree in a single aim or purpose, and that is to exalt the human character to a height of virtue never known before. Let the skeptic name, if he can, one Christian principle which has not a bearing on this end. A consistency of this kind is the strongest mark of a rational religion which can be conceived. Let me observe, in passing, that, besides this harmony of the Christian doctrines with one another, there is a striking and beautiful agreement between the teachings of Jesus and his character, which gives confirmation to both. Whatever Jesus taught, you may see embodied in himself. There is perfect unity between the system and its Founder. His life republished what fell from his lips. With his lips he enjoined earnestly, constantly a strong and disinterested philanthropy; and how harmoniously and sublimely did his cross join with his word in enforcing this exalted virtue! With his lips he taught the mercy of God to sinners; and of this attribute he gave a beautiful illustration in his own deep interest in the sinful, in his free intercourse with the most fallen, and in his patient efforts to recover them to virtue and to filial reliance on their Father in Heaven. So, his preaching turned much

on the importance of raising the mind above the world; and his own life was a constant renunciation of worldly interests, a cheerful endurance of poverty that he might make many truly rich. So, his discourses continually revealed to man the doctrine of immortality; and in his own person he brought down this truth to men's senses, by rising from the dead and ascending to another state of being.—I have only glanced at the unity which subsists between Jesus and his religion. Christianity, from every point of view, will be found a harmonious system. It breathes throughout one spirit and one purpose. Its doctrines, precepts, and examples have the consistency of reason.

But this is not enough. A rational religion must agree not only with itself, but with all other truths, whether revealed by the outward creation or our own souls. I take, then, Christianity into the creation, I place it by the side of nature. Do they agree? I say, Perfectly. I can discover nothing, in what claims to be God's word, at variance with his works. This is a bright proof of the reasonableness of Christianity. When I consult nature with the lights modern science affords, I see continually multiplying traces of the doctrine of One God. The more I extend my researches into nature, the more I see that it is a whole, the product of one wisdom, power, and goodness. It bears witness to one Author, nor has its testimony been without effect; for although the human mind has often multiplied its objects of worship, still it has always tended towards the doctrine of the divine unity, and has embraced it more and more firmly in the course of human improvement. The Heathen, while he erected many altars, generally believed in one Supreme Di-

vinity, to whom the inferior deities were subjected and from whom they sprung. Need I tell you of the harmony which subsists between nature and revelation in this particular? To Christianity belongs the glory of having proclaimed this primitive truth with new power, and of having spread it over the whole civilized world. — Again. Nature gives intimation of another truth, I mean of the universal, impartial goodness of God. When I look round on the creation, I see nothing to lead me to suspect that its Author confines his love to a few. The sun sends no brighter beam into the palace of the proudest king, than into the hut of the meanest peasant. The clouds select not one man's fields rather than his neighbour's, but shed down their blessings on rich and poor, and, still more, on the just and the unjust. True, there is a variety of conditions among men; but this takes place, not by any interposition of God, but by fixed and general laws of nature. Impartial, universal goodness is the character in which God is revealed by his works, when they are properly understood; and need I tell you how brightly this truth shines in the pages of Christianity, and how this religion has been the great means of establishing it among men? — Again. When I look through nature, nothing strikes me more than the union which subsists among all its works. Nothing stands alone in the creation. The humblest plant has intimate connexions with the air, the clouds, the sun. Harmony is the great law of nature, and how strikingly does Christianity coincide here with God's works; for what is the design of this religion, but to bring the human race, the intelligent creation of God, into a harmony, union, peace, like that which knits together the outward universe? I will give another

illustration. It is one of the great laws of nature, that good shall come to us through agents of God's appointment; that beings shall receive life, support, knowledge, and safety through the interposition and labors and sufferings of others. Sometimes whole communities are rescued from oppression and ruin chiefly by the efforts and sacrifices of a wise, disinterested, and resolute individual. How accordant with this ordination of nature is the doctrine of Christianity, that our Heavenly Father, having purposed our recovery from sin and death, has instituted for this end the agency and mediation of his Son; that he has given an illustrious deliverer to the world, through whose toils and sufferings we may rise to purity and immortal life. — I say, then, that revelation is consistent with nature, when nature is truly interpreted by reason. I see it bringing out with noonday brightness the truths which dawn in nature; so that it is reason in its most perfect form.

I have thus carried Christianity abroad into nature. I now carry it within, and compare it with the human soul; and is it consistent with the great truths of reason which I discover there? I affirm, that it is. When I look into the soul, I am at once struck with its immeasurable superiority to the body. I am struck with the contrast between these different elements of my nature, between this active, soaring mind, and these limbs and material organs which tend perpetually to the earth, and are soon to be resolved into dust. How consistent is Christianity with this inward teaching! In Christianity, with what strength, with what bold relief, is the supremacy of the spiritual nature brought out! What contempt does Jesus cast on the body and its interests, when compared with the redemption of the soul! —

Another great truth dawns on me when I look within I learn more and more, that the great springs of happiness and misery are in the mind, and that the efforts of men to secure peace by other processes than by inward purification, are vain strivings; and Christianity is not only consistent with, but founded on, this great truth; teaching us, that the kingdom of heaven is within us, and proposing, as its great end, to rescue the mind from evil, and to endue it with strength and dignity worthy its divine origin. — Again, when I look into the soul I meet intimations of another great truth. I discern in it capacities which are not fully unfolded here. I see desires which find no adequate good on earth. I see a principle of hope always pressing forward into futurity. Here are marks of a nature not made wholly for this world; and how does Christianity agree with this teaching of our own souls? Its great doctrine is that of a higher life, where the spiritual germ within us will open for ever, and where the immortal good after which the mind aspires will prove a reality. — Had I time, I might survey distinctly the various principles of the soul, the intellectual, moral, social, and active, and might show you how Christianity accords with them all, enlarging their scope and energy, proposing to them nobler objects, and aiding their developement by the impulse of a boundless hope. But, commending these topics to your private meditation, I will take but one more view of the soul. When I look within, I see stains of sin, and fears and forebodings of guilt; and how adapted to such a nature is Christianity, a religion which contains blood-sealed promises of forgiveness to the penitent, and which proffers heavenly strength to fortify us in our conflict with moral evil. — I say, then,

Christianity consists with the nature within us, as well as with nature around us. The highest truths in respect to the soul are not only responded to, but are carried out by Christianity, so that it deserves to be called the perfection of reason.

I have now shown, in a variety of particulars, that Christianity has the character of Consistency, and thus satisfies the first demand of reason. It does not divide the mind against itself, does not introduce discord into the intellect, by proposing doctrines which our consciousness and experience repel. But these views do not exhaust the present topic. It is not enough to speak of Christianity as furnishing views which harmonize with one another, and with all known truth. It gives a new and cheering consistency to the views with which we are furnished by the universe. Nature and providence, with all their beauty, regularity, and beneficence, have yet perplexing aspects. Their elements are often seen in conflict with one another. Sunshine and storms, pleasure and pain, success and disaster, abundance and want, health and sickness, life and death, seem to ordinary spectators to be mixed together confusedly and without aim. Reason desires nothing so earnestly, so anxiously, as to solve these discordant appearances, as to discover some great, central, reconciling truth, around which they may be arranged, and from which they may borrow light and harmony. This deep want of the rational nature, Christianity has supplied. It has disclosed a unity of purpose in the seemingly hostile dispensations of providence, and opened to the mind a new world of order, beauty, and benevolent design. Christianity, revealing, as it does, the unbounded mercy of God to his sinful creatures; re-

vealing an endless futurity, in which the inequalities of the present state are to be redressed, and which reduces by its immensity the sorest pains of life to light and momentary evils; revealing a Moral Perfection, which is worth all pain and conflicts, and which is most effectually and gloriously won amidst suffering and temptation; revealing in Jesus Christ the sublimity and rewards of tried and all-enduring virtue; revealing in Him the founder of a new moral kingdom or power, which is destined to subdue the world to God; and proffering the Holy Spirit to all who strive to build up in themselves and others the reign of truth and virtue; Christianity, I say, by these revelations, has poured a flood of light over nature and providence, and harmonized the infinite complexity of the works and ways of God. Thus it meets the first want of the rational nature, the craving for consistency of views. It is reason's most effectual minister and friend. Is it not, then, eminently a Rational Faith?

Having shown that Christianity has the character of consistency, I proceed to the second mark or stamp of reason on a religion, that is, Universality; and this I claim for Christianity. This indeed is one of the most distinguishing features of our religion, and so obvious and striking as to need little illustration. When I examine the doctrines, precepts, and spirit of Christianity, I discover, in them all, this character of Universality. I discover nothing narrow, temporary, local. The Gospel bears the stamp of no particular age or country. It does not concern itself with the perishable interests of communities or individuals; but appeals to the Spiritual, Immortal, Unbounded principle in human nature. Its aim is to direct the mind to the Infinite Being, and

to an Infinite good. It is not made up, like other religions, of precise forms and details; but it inculcates immutable and all-comprehending principles of duty, leaving every man to apply them for himself to the endless variety of human conditions. It separates from God the partial, limited views of Judaism and heathenism, and holds him forth in the sublime attributes of the Universal Father. In like manner, it inculcates philanthropy without exceptions or bounds; a love to man as man, a love founded on that immortal nature of which all men partake, and which binds us to recognise in each a child of God and a brother. The spirit of bigotry, which confines its charity to a sect, and the spirit of aristocracy, which looks on the multitude as an inferior race, are alike rebuked by Christianity; which, eighteen hundred years ago, in a narrow and superstitious age, taught, what the present age is beginning to understand, that all men are essentially equal, and that all are to be honored, because made for immortality and endued with capacities of ceaseless improvement. The more I examine Christianity, the more I am struck with its universality. I see in it a religion made for all regions and all times, for all classes and all stages of society. It is fitted, not to the Asiatic or the European, but to the essential principles of human nature, to man under the tropical or polar skies, to all descriptions of intellect and condition. It speaks a language which all men need and all can understand; enjoins a virtue, which is man's happiness and glory in every age and clime; and ministers consolations and hopes which answer to man's universal lot, to the sufferings, the fear, and the self-rebuke, which cleave to our nature in every outward change. I see in it the light, not of one na-

tion, but of the world; and a light reaching beyond the world, beyond time, to higher modes of existence and to an interminable futurity. Other religions have been intended to meet the exigencies of particular countries or times, and therefore society in its progress has outgrown them; but Christianity meets more and more the wants of the soul in proportion to the advancement of our race, and thus proves itself to be Eternal Truth. After these remarks, may I not claim for Christianity that character of universality which is the highest distinction of reason? To understand fully the confirmation which these views give to the Gospel, you must compare it with the religions prevalent in the age of Christ, all of which bore the marks of narrow, local, temporary institutions. How striking the contrast! And how singular the fact, that amid this darkness there sprung up a religion so consistent and universal, as to deserve to be called the perfection of reason!

I do and must feel, my friends, that the claim of Christianity to the honor of being a rational religion, is fully established. As such I commend it to you. As such it will more and more approve itself, in proportion as you study and practise it. You will never find cause to complain, that by adopting it you have enslaved or degraded your highest powers. Here, then, I might stop, and might consider my work as done. But I am aware that objections have been made to the rational character of our religion, which may still linger in the minds of some of my hearers. A brief notice of these may aid the purpose, and will form a proper conclusion, of this discourse.

I imagine that were some who are present to speak,

they would tell me, that if Christianity be judged by its fruits, it deserves any character but that of rational. I should be told that no religion has borne a more abundant harvest of extravagance and fanaticism. I should be told that reason is a calm, reflecting, sober principle, and I should be asked whether such is the character of the Christianity which has overspread the world. Perhaps some of you will remind me of the feverish, wild, passionate religion, which is now systematically dispersed through our country, and I shall be asked whether a system under which such delusions prevail can be a rational one.

To these objections I answer, You say much that is true. I grant that reason is a calm and reflecting principle, and I see little calmness or reflection among many who take exclusively the name of Christ. But I say, you have no right to confound Christianity with its professors. This religion, as you know, has come down to us through many ages of darkness, during which it must have been corrupted and obscured. Common candor requires that you should judge of it as it came from its Founder. Go, then, to its original records; place yourselves near Jesus; and tell me if you ever found yourselves in the presence of so calm a teacher. We indeed discern in Jesus great earnestness, but joined with entire self-control. Sensibility breathes through his whole teaching and life, but always tempered with wisdom. Amidst his boldest thoughts and expressions, we discover no marks of ungoverned feeling or a diseased imagination. Take, as an example, his longest discourse, the Sermon on the Mount. How weighty the thoughts! How grave and dignified the style! You recollect, that the multitude were astonished, not at the passionate

vehemence, but at the authority, with which he spoke. Read next the last discourse of Jesus to his disciples in St. John's Gospel. What a deep, yet mild and subdued tenderness mingles with conscious greatness in that wonderful address. Take what is called the Lord's Prayer, which Jesus gave as the model of all prayer to God. Does that countenance fanatical fervor, or violent appeals to our Creator? Let me further ask, Does Jesus anywhere place religion in tumultuous, ungoverned emotion? Does he not teach us, that obedience, not feeling, marks and constitutes true piety, and that the most acceptable offering to God is to exercise mercy to our fellow-creatures? When I compare the clamorous preaching and passionate declamation, too common in the Christian world, with the composed dignity, the deliberate wisdom, the freedom from all extravagance, which characterized Jesus, I can imagine no greater contrast; and I am sure that the fiery zealot is no representative of Christianity.

I have done with the first objection; but another class of objections is often urged against the reasonable character of our religion. It has been strenuously maintained, that Christianity contains particular doctrines which are irrational, and which involve the whole religion to which they are essential, in their own condemnation. To this class of objections I have a short reply. I insist that these offensive doctrines do not belong to Christianity, but are human additions, and therefore do not derogate from its reasonableness and truth. What is the doctrine most frequently adduced to fix the charge of irrationality on the Gospel? It is the Trinity. This is pronounced by the unbeliever a gross offence to reason. It teaches that there is one God, and yet that there are

three divine persons. According to the doctrine, these three persons perform different offices, and sustain different relations to each other. One is Father, another his Son. One sends, another is sent. They love each other, converse with each other, and make a covenant with each other; and yet, with all these distinctions, they are, according to the doctrine, not different beings, but one being, one and the same God. Is this a rational doctrine? has often been the question of the objector to Christianity. I answer, No. I can as easily believe that the whole human race are one man, as that three infinite persons, performing such different offices, are one God. But I maintain, that, because the Trinity is irrational, it does not follow that the same reproach belongs to Christianity; for this doctrine is no part of the Christian religion. I know, there are passages which are continually quoted in its defence; but allow me to prove doctrines in the same way, that is, by detaching texts from their connexion and interpreting them without reference to the general current of Scripture, and I can prove any thing and every thing from the Bible. I can prove, that God has human passions. I can prove transubstantiation, which is taught much more explicitly than the Trinity. Detached texts prove nothing. Christ is called God; the same title is given to Moses and to rulers. Christ has said, "I and my Father are one;" so he prayed that all his disciples might be one, meaning not one and the same being, but one in affection and purpose. I ask you, before you judge on this point, to read the Scriptures as a whole, and to inquire into their general strain and teaching in regard to Christ. I find him uniformly distinguishing between himself and God, calling himself, not God the Son, but the Son of God, contin-

ually speaking of himself as sent by God, continually referring his power and miracles to God. I hear him saying, that of himself he can do nothing, and praying to his Father under the character of the only true God. Such I affirm to be the tenor, the current, the general strain of the New Testament; and the scattered passages, on which a different doctrine is built, should have no weight against this host of witnesses. Do not rest your faith on a few texts. Sometimes these favorite texts are no part of Scripture. For example, the famous passage on which the Trinity mainly rests, "There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," — this text, I say, though found at present in John's Epistle, and read in our churches, has been pronounced by the ablest critics a forgery; and a vast majority of the educated ministers of this country are satisfied, that it is not a part of Scripture. Suffer no man, then, to select texts for you as decisive of religious controversies. Read the whole record for yourselves, and possess yourselves of its general import. I am very desirous to separate the doctrine in question from Christianity, because it fastens the charge of irrationality on the whole religion. It is one of the great obstacles to the propagation of the Gospel. The Jews will not hear of a Trinity. I have seen in the countenance, and heard in the tones of the voice, the horror with which that people shrink from the doctrine, that God died on the cross. Mahometans, too, when they hear this opinion from Christian missionaries, repeat the first article of their faith, "There is one God;" and look with pity or scorn on the disciples of Jesus, as deserters of the plainest and greatest truth of religion. Even the Indian of our wilderness, who wor-

ships the Great Spirit, has charged absurdity on the teacher who has gone to indoctrinate him in a Trinity. How many, too, in Christian countries, have suspected the whole religion for this one error. Believing, then, as I do, that it forms no part of Christianity, my allegiance to Jesus Christ calls me openly to withstand it. In so doing I would wound no man's feelings. I doubt not, that they who adopt this doctrine intend, equally with those who oppose it, to render homage to the truth and service to Christianity. They think that their peculiar faith gives new interest to the character and new authority to the teaching of Jesus. But they grievously err. The views, by which they hope to build up love towards Christ, detract from the perfection of his Father; and I fear, that the kind of piety, which prevails now in the Christian world, bears witness to the sad influence of this obscuration of the true glory of God. We need not desert reason or corrupt Christianity, to insure the purest, deepest love towards the only true God, or towards Jesus Christ, whom he has sent for our redemption.

I have named one doctrine, which is often urged against Christianity as irrational. There is one more on which I would offer a few remarks. Christianity has often been reproached with teaching, that God brings men into life totally depraved, and condemns immense multitudes to everlasting misery for sins to which their nature has irresistibly impelled them. This is said to be irrational, and consequently such must be the religion which teaches it. I certainly shall not attempt to vindicate this theological fiction. A more irrational doctrine could not, I think, be contrived; and it is something worse; it is as immoral in its tendency, as it is unrea-

sonable. It is suited to alienate men from God and from one another. Were it really believed (which it cannot be), men would look up with dread and detestation to the Author of their being, and look round with horror on their fellow-creatures. It would dissolve society. Were men to see in one another wholly corrupt beings, incarnate fiends, without one genuine virtue, society would become as repulsive as a den of lions or a nest of vipers. All confidence, esteem, love, would die; and without these, the interest, charm, and worth of existence would expire. What a pang would shoot through a parent's heart, if he were to see in the smiling infant a moral being continually and wholly propense to sin, in whose mind were thickly sown the seeds of hatred to God and goodness, and who had commenced his existance under the curse of his Creator? What good man could consent to be a parent, if his offspring were to be born to this infinitely wretched inheritance? I say, the doctrine is of immoral tendency; but I do not say that they who profess it are immoral. The truth is, that none do or can hold it in its full and proper import. I have seen its advocates smile as benignantly on the child whom their creed has made a demon, as if it were an angel; and I have seen them mingling with their fellow-creatures as cordially and confidingly as if the doctrine of total depravity had never entered their ears. Perhaps the most mischievous effect of the doctrine is the dishonor which it has thrown on Christianity. This dishonor I would wipe away. Christianity teaches no such doctrine. Where do you find it in the New Testament? Did Jesus teach it, when he took little children in his arms and blessed them, and said "Of such is the kingdom of God"? Did Paul teach it, when

he spoke of the Gentiles, who have not the law, or a written revelation, but who do by nature the things contained in the law? Christainity indeed speaks strongly of human guilt, but always treats men as beings who have the power of doing right, and who have come into existence under the smile of their Creator.

I have now completed my vindication of the claim of the Gospel to the character of a rational religion; and my aim has been, not to serve a party, but the cause of our common Christianity. At the present day, one of the most urgent duties of its friends is, to rescue it from the reproach of waging war with reason. The character of our age demands this. There have been times when Christianity, though loaded with unreasonable doctrines, retained its hold on men's faith; for men had not learned to think. They received their religion as children learn the catechism; they substituted the priest for their own understandings, and cared neither what nor why they believed. But that day is gone by, and the spirit of freedom, which has succeeded it, is subjecting Christianity to a scrutiny more and more severe; and if this religion cannot vindicate itself to the reflecting, the calm, the wise, as a reasonable service, it cannot stand. Fanatical sects may, for a time, spread an intolerant excitement through a community, and impose silence on the objections of the skeptical. But fanaticism is the epidemic of a season; it wastes itself by its own violence. Sooner or later the voice of reflection will be heard. Men will ask, What are the claims of Christianity? Does it bear the marks of truth? And if it be found to war with nature and reason, it will be, and it ought to be abandoned. On this ground, I am anxious that Christianity should be cleared from all

human additions and corruptions. If indeed irrational doctrines belong to it, then I have no desire to separate them from it. I have no desire, for the sake of upholding the Gospel, to wrap up and conceal, much less to deny, any of its real principles. Did I think that it was burdened with one irrational doctrine, I would say so, and I would leave it, as I found it, with this millstone round its neck. But I know none such. I meet, indeed, some difficulties in the narrative part of the New Testament; and there are arguments in the Epistles, which, however suited to the Jews, to whom they were first addressed, are not apparently adapted to men at large; but I see not a principle of the religion, which my reason, calmly and impartially exercised, pronounces inconsistent with any great truth. I have the strongest conviction, that Christianity is reason in its most perfect form, and therefore I plead for its disengagement from the irrational additions with which it has been clogged for ages.

With these views of Christianity, I do and I must hold it fast. I cannot surrender it to the cavils or scoffs of infidelity. I do not blush to own it, for it is a rational religion. It satisfies the wants of the intellect as well as those of the heart. I know that men of strong minds have opposed it. But, as if Providence intended that their sophistry should carry a refutation on its own front, they have generally fallen into errors so gross and degrading, as to prove them to be any thing rather than the apostles of reason. When I go from the study of Christianity to their writings, I feel as if I were passing from the warm, bright sun into a chilling twilight, which too often deepens into utter darkness. I am not, then, ashamed of the Gospel. I see it glori-

fied by the hostile systems which are reared for its destruction. I follow Jesus, because he is eminently "the Light"; and I doubt not, that, to his true disciples, he will be a guide to that world, where the obscurities of our present state will be dispersed, and where reason as well as virtue will be unfolded under the quickening influence and in the more manifest presence of God.

SPIRITUAL FREEDOM.

DISCOURSE

PREACHED AT THE ANNUAL ELECTION,

MAY 26, 1830.

JOHN viii. 31, 32. 36: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

THE Scriptures continually borrow from nature and social life, illustrations and emblems of spiritual truth. The character, religion, and blessings of Jesus Christ, are often placed before us by sensible images. His influences on the mind are shadowed forth by the light of the sun, by the vital union of the head with the members, by the shepherd bringing back the wandering flock, by the vine which nourishes and fructifies the branches, by the foundation sustaining the edifice, by bread and wine invigorating the animal frame. In our text we have a figurative illustration of his influence or religion, peculiarly intelligible and dear to this community. He speaks of himself as giving freedom, that great good of individuals and states; and by this

similitude he undoubtedly intended to place before men, in a strong and attractive light, that spiritual and inward liberty which his truth confers on its obedient disciples. Inward, spiritual liberty, this is the great gift of Jesus Christ. This will be the chief topic of the present discourse. I wish to show, that this is the supreme good of men, and that civil and political liberty has but little worth, but as it springs from and invigorates this.

From what I have now said, the general tone of this discourse may be easily anticipated. I shall maintain, that the highest interest of communities, as well as individuals, is a spiritual interest; that outward and earthly goods are of little worth, but as bearing on the mind, and tending to its liberation, strength, and glory. And I am fully aware that in taking that course, I lay myself open to objection. I shall be told, that I show my ignorance of human nature, in attempting to interest men by such refined views of society; that I am too speculative; that spiritual liberty is too unsubstantial and visionary to be proposed to statesmen as an end in legislation; that the dreams of the closet should not be obtruded on practical men; that gross and tangible realities can alone move the multitude; and that to talk to politicians of the spiritual interests of society as of supreme importance, is as idle as to try to stay with a breath the force of the whirlwind.

I anticipate such objections. But they do not move me. I firmly believe, that the only truth which is to do men lasting good, is that which relates to the soul, which carries them into its depths, which reveals to them its powers and the purposes of its creation. The progress of society is retarded, by nothing more than

by the low views which its leaders are accustomed to take of human nature. Man has a mind as well as a body, and this he ought to know; and till he knows it, feels it, and is deeply penetrated by it, he knows nothing aright. His body should, in a sense, vanish away before his mind; or, in the language of Christ, he should hate his animal life in comparison with the intellectual and moral life which is to endure for ever. This doctrine, however, is pronounced too refined. Useful and practical truth, according to its most improved expositors, consists in knowing that we have an animal nature, and in making this our chief care; in knowing that we have mouths to be filled, and limbs to be clothed; that we live on the earth, which it is our business to till; that we have a power of accumulating wealth, and that this power is the measure of the greatness of the community! For such doctrines I have no respect. I know no wisdom but that which reveals man to himself, and which teaches him to regard all social institutions, and his whole life, as the means of unfolding and exalting the spirit within him. All policy which does not recognise this truth, seems to me shallow. The statesman who does not look at the bearing of his measures on the mind of a nation, is unfit to touch one of men's great interests. Unhappily, statesmen have seldom understood the sacredness of human nature and human society. Hence, policy has become almost a contaminated word. Hence, government has so often been the scourge of mankind.

I mean not to disparage political science. The best constitution and the best administration of a state, are subjects worthy of the profoundest thought. But there are deeper foundations of public prosperity than these.

The statesman who would substitute these for that virtue which they ought to subserve and exalt, will only add his name to the long catalogue which history preserves of baffled politicians. It is idle to hope, by our short-sighted contrivances, to insure to a people a happiness which their own character has not earned. The everlasting laws of God's moral government we cannot repeal; and parchment constitutions, however wise, will prove no shelter from the retributions which fall on a degraded community.

With these convictions, I feel that no teaching is so practical as that which impresses on a people the importance of their spiritual interests. With these convictions, I feel that I cannot better meet the demands of this occasion, than by leading you to prize, above all other rights and liberties, that inward freedom which Christ came to confer. To this topic I now solicit your attention.

And first, I may be asked what I mean by Inward, Spiritual Freedom. The common and true answer is, that it is freedom from sin. I apprehend, however, that to many, if not to most, these words are too vague to convey a full and deep sense of the greatness of the blessing. Let me, then, offer a brief explanation; and the most important remark in illustrating this freedom, is, that it is not a negative state, nor the mere absence of sin; for such a freedom may be ascribed to inferior animals, or to children before becoming moral agents. Spiritual freedom is the attribute of a mind, in which reason and conscience have begun to act, and which is free through its own energy, through fidelity to the truth, through resistance of temptation. I cannot therefore better give my views of spiritual freedom, than by say-

ing, that it is moral energy or force of holy purpose put forth against the senses, against the passions, against the world, and thus liberating the intellect, conscience, and will, so that they may act with strength and unfold themselves for ever. The essence of spiritual freedom is power. A man liberated from sensual lusts by a palsy, would not therefore be inwardly free. He only is free, who, through self-conflict and moral resolution, sustained by trust in God, subdues the passions which have debased him, and, escaping the thraldom of low objects, binds himself to pure and lofty ones. That mind alone is free, which, looking to God as the inspirer and rewarder of virtue, adopts his law, written on the heart and in his word, as its supreme rule, and which, in obedience to this, governs itself, reveres itself, exerts faithfully its best powers, and unfolds itself by well-doing, in whatever sphere God's providence assigns.

It has pleased the All-wise Disposer to encompass us from our birth by difficulty and allurement, to place us in a world where wrong-doing is often gainful, and duty rough and perilous, where many vices oppose the dictates of the inward monitor, where the body presses as a weight on the mind, and matter, by its perpetual agency on the senses, becomes a barrier between us and the spiritual world. We are in the midst of influences, which menace the intellect and heart; and to be free, is to withstand and conquer these.

I call that mind free, which masters the senses, which protects itself against animal appetites, which contemns pleasure and pain in comparison with its own energy, which penetrates beneath the body and recognises its own reality and greatness, which passes life, not in asking what it shall eat or drink, but in hungering, thirsting, and seeking after righteousness.

I call that mind free, which escapes the bondage of matter, which, instead of stopping at the material universe and making it a prison wall, passes beyond it to its Author, and finds in the radiant signatures which it everywhere bears of the Infinite Spirit, helps to its own spiritual enlargement.

I call that mind free, which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers, which calls no man master, which does not content itself with a passive or hereditary faith, which opens itself to light whencesoever it may come, which receives new truth as an angel from heaven, which, whilst consulting others, inquires still more of the oracle within itself, and uses instructions from abroad, not to supersede but to quicken and exalt its own energies.

I call that mind free, which sets no bounds to its love, which is not imprisoned in itself or in a sect, which recognises in all human beings the image of God and the rights of his children, which delights in virtue and sympathizes with suffering wherever they are seen, which conquers pride, anger, and sloth, and offers itself up a willing victim to the cause of mankind.

I call that mind free, which is not passively framed by outward circumstances, which is not swept away by the torrent of events, which is not the creature of accidental impulse, but which bends events to its own improvement, and acts from an inward spring, from immutable principles which it has deliberately espoused.

I call that mind free, which protects itself against the usurpations of society, which does not cower to human opinion, which feels itself accountable to a higher tribunal than man's, which respects a higher law than fashion, which respects itself too much to be the slave or tool *of the many* or the few

I call that mind free, which, through confidence in God and in the power of virtue, has cast off all fear but that of wrong-doing, which no menace or peril can enthrall, which is calm in the midst of tumults, and possesses itself though all else be lost.

I call that mind free, which resists the bondage of habit, which does not mechanically repeat itself and copy the past, which does not live on its old virtues, which does not enslave itself to precise rules, but which forgets what is behind, listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour itself forth in fresh and higher exertions.

I call that mind free, which is jealous of its own freedom, which guards itself from being merged in others, which guards its empire over itself as nobler than the empire of the world.

In fine, I call that mind free, which, conscious of its affinity with God, and confiding in his promises by Jesus Christ, devotes itself faithfully to the unfolding of all its powers, which passes the bounds of time and death, which hopes to advance for ever, and which finds inexhaustible power, both for action and suffering, in the prospect of immortality.

Such is the spiritual freedom which Christ came to give. It consists in moral force, in self-control, in the enlargement of thought and affection, and in the unrestrained action of our best powers. This is the great good of Christianity, nor can we conceive a greater within the gift of God. I know that to many, this will seem too refined a good to be proposed as the great end of society and government. But our skepticism cannot change the nature of things. I know how little this freedom is understood or enjoyed, how enslaved men

are to sense, and passion, and the world; and I know, too, that through this slavery they are wretched, and that while it lasts no social institution can give them happiness.

I now proceed, as I proposed, to show, that civil or political liberty is of little worth, but as it springs from, expresses, and invigorates this spiritual freedom. I account civil liberty as the chief good of states, because it accords with, and ministers to, energy and elevation of mind. Nor is this a truth so remote or obscure as to need laborious proof or illustration. For consider what civil liberty means. It consists in the removal of all restraint, but such as the public weal demands. And what is the end and benefit of removing restraint? It is that men may put forth their powers, and act from themselves. Vigorous and invigorating action is the chief fruit of all outward freedom. Why break the chains from the captive, but that he may bring into play his liberated limbs? Why open his prison, but that he may go forth, and open his eyes on a wide prospect, and exert and enjoy his various energies? Liberty, which does not minister to action and the growth of power, is only a name, is no better than slavery.

The chief benefit of free institutions is clear and unutterably precious. Their chief benefit is, that they aid freedom of mind, that they give scope to man's faculties, that they throw him on his own resources, and summon him to work out his own happiness. It is, that, by removing restraint from intellect, they favor force, originality, and enlargement of thought. It is, that, by removing restraint from worship, they favor the ascent of the soul to God. It is, that, by removing restraint

from industry, they stir up invention and enterprise to explore and subdue the material world, and thus rescue the race from those sore physical wants and pains, which narrow and blight the mind. It is, that they cherish noble sentiments, frankness, courage, and self-respect.

Free institutions contribute in no small degree to freedom and force of mind, by teaching the essential equality of men, and their right and duty to govern themselves; and I cannot but consider the superiority of an elective government, as consisting very much in the testimony which it bears to these ennobling truths. It has often been said, that a good code of laws, and not the form of government, is what determines a people's happiness. But good laws, if not springing from the community, if imposed by a master, would lose much of their value. The best code is that which has its origin in the will of the people who obey it; which, whilst it speaks with authority, still recognises self-government as the primary right and duty of a rational being; and which thus cherishes in the individual, be his condition what it may, a just self-respect.

We may learn, that the chief good and the most precious fruit of civil liberty, is spiritual freedom and power, by considering what is the chief evil of tyranny. I know that tyranny does evil by invading men's outward interests, by making property and life insecure, by robbing the laborer to pamper the noble and king. But its worst influence is *within*. Its chief curse is, that it breaks and tames the spirit, sinks man in his own eyes, takes away vigor of thought and action, substitutes for conscience an outward rule, makes him abject, cowardly, a parasite and a cringing slave. This

is the curse of tyranny. It wars with the soul, and thus it wars with God. We read in theologians and poets, of angels fighting against the Creator, of battles in heaven. But God's throne in heaven is unassailable. The only war against God is against his image, against the divine principle in the soul, and this is waged by tyranny in all its forms. We here see the chief curse of tyranny; and this should teach us that civil freedom is a blessing, chiefly as it reverences the human soul, and ministers to its growth and power.

Without this inward, spiritual freedom, outward liberty is of little worth. What boots it, that I am crushed by no foreign yoke, if through ignorance and vice, through selfishness and fear, I want the command of my own mind? The worst tyrants are those which establish themselves in our own breast. The man who wants force of principle and purpose, is a slave, however free the air he breathes. The mind, after all, is our only possession, or, in other words, we possess all things through its energy and enlargement; and civil institutions are to be estimated by the free and pure minds to which they give birth.

It will be seen from these remarks, that I consider the freedom or moral strength of the individual mind, as the supreme good, and the highest end of government. I am aware that other views are often taken. It is said that government is intended for the public, for the community, not for the individual. The idea of a national interest prevails in the minds of statesmen, and to this it is thought that the individual may be sacrificed. But I would maintain, that the individual is not made for the state, so much as the state for the individual. A man is not created for political relations

as his highest end, but for indefinite spiritual progress, and is placed in political relations as the means of his progress. The human soul is greater, more sacred, than the state, and must never be sacrificed to it. The human soul is to outlive all earthly institutions. The distinction of nations is to pass away. Thrones, which have stood for ages, are to meet the doom pronounced upon all man's works. But the individual mind survives, and the obscurest subject, if true to God, will rise to a power never wielded by earthly potentates.

A human being is a member of the community, not as a limb is a member of the body, or as a wheel is a part of a machine, intended only to contribute to some general, joint result. He was created, not to be merged in the whole, as a drop in the ocean, or as a particle of sand on the sea-shore, and to aid only in composing a mass. He is an ultimate being, made for his own perfection as the highest end, made to maintain an individual existence, and to serve others only as far as consists with his own virtue and progress. Hitherto governments have tended greatly to obscure this importance of the individual, to depress him in his own eyes, to give him the idea of an outward interest more important than the invisible soul, and of an outward authority more sacred than the voice of God in his own secret conscience. Rulers have called the private man the property of the state, meaning generally by the state themselves, and thus the many have been immolated to the few, and have even believed that this was their highest destination. These views cannot be too earnestly withstood. Nothing seems to me so needful as to give to the mind the consciousness, which governments have done so much to suppress, of its own sep-

arate worth. Let the individual feel, that, through his immortality, he may concentrate in his own being a greater good than that of nations. Let him feel that he is placed in the community, not to part with his individuality, or to become a tool, but that he should find a sphere for his various powers, and a preparation for immortal glory. To me, the progress of society consists in nothing more, than in bringing out the individual, in giving him a consciousness of his own being, and in quickening him to strengthen and elevate his own mind.

In thus maintaining that the individual is the end of social institutions, I may be thought to discourage public efforts and the sacrifice of private interests to the state. Far from it. No man, I affirm, will serve his fellow-beings so effectually, so fervently, as he who is not their slave; as he who, casting off every other yoke, subjects himself to the law of duty in his own mind. For this law enjoins a disinterested and generous spirit, as man's glory and likeness to his Maker. Individuality, or moral self-subsistence, is the surest foundation of an all-comprehending love. No man so multiplies his bonds with the community, as he who watches most jealously over his own perfection. There is a beautiful harmony between the good of the state and the moral freedom and dignity of the individual. Were it not so, were these interests in any case discordant, were an individual ever called to serve his country by acts debasing his own mind, he ought not to waver a moment as to the good which he should prefer. Property, life, he should joyfully surrender to the state. But his soul he must never stain or enslave. From poverty, pain, the rack, the gibbet, he should

not recoil; but for no good of others ought he to part with self-control, or violate the inward law. We speak of the patriot as sacrificing himself to the public weal Do we mean, that he sacrifices what is most properly himself, the principle of piety and virtue? Do we not feel, that, however great may be the good, which, through his sufferings, accrues to the state, a greater and purer glory redounds to himself, and that the most precious fruit of his disinterested services, is the strength of resolution and philanthropy which is accumulated in his own soul?

I have thus endeavoured to illustrate and support the doctrine, that spiritual freedom, or force and elevation of soul, is the great good to which civil freedom is subordinate, and which all social institutions should propose as their supreme end.

I proceed to point out some of the means by which this spiritual liberty may be advanced; and, passing over a great variety of topics, I shall confine myself to two;—Religion and Government.

I begin with Religion, the mightiest agent in human affairs. To this belongs preëminently the work of freeing and elevating the mind. All other means are comparatively impotent. The sense of God is the only spring, by which the crushing weight of sense, of the world, and temptation, can be withstood. Without a consciousness of our relation to God, all other relations will prove adverse to spiritual life and progress. I have spoken of the religious sentiment as the mightiest agent on earth. It has accomplished more, it has strengthened men to do and suffer more, than all other principles. It can sustain the mind against all other

powers. Of all principles it is the deepest, the most ineradicable. In its perversion, indeed, it has been fruitful of crime and woe; but the very energy which it has given to the passions, when they have mixed with and corrupted it, teaches us the omnipotence with which it is imbued.

Religion gives life, strength, elevation to the mind, by connecting it with the Infinite Mind; by teaching it to regard itself as the offspring and care of the Infinite Father, who created it that he might communicate to it his own spirit and perfections, who framed it for truth and virtue, who framed it for himself, who subjects it to sore trials, that by conflict and endurance it may grow strong, and who has sent his Son to purify it from every sin, and to clothe it with immortality. It is religion alone, which nourishes patient, resolute hopes and efforts for our own souls. Without it, we can hardly escape self-contempt, and the contempt of our race. Without God, our existence has no support, our life no aim, our improvements no permanence, our best labors no sure and enduring results, our spiritual weakness no power to lean upon, and our noblest aspirations and desires no pledge of being realized in a better state. Struggling virtue has no friend; suffering virtue no promise of victory. Take away God, and life becomes mean, and man poorer than the brute.—I am accustomed to speak of the greatness of human nature; but it is great only through its parentage; great, because descended from God, because connected with a goodness and power from which it is to be enriched for ever; and nothing but the consciousness of this connexion, can give that hope of elevation, through which alone the mind is to rise to true strength and liberty.

All the truths of religion conspire to one end, spiritual liberty. All the objects which it offers to our thoughts are sublime, kindling, exalting. Its fundamental truth is the existence of one God, one Infinite and Everlasting Father; and it teaches us to look on the universe as pervaded, quickened, and vitally joined into one harmonious and beneficent whole, by his ever-present and omnipotent love. By this truth it breaks the power of matter and sense, of present pleasure and pain, of anxiety and fear. It turns the mind from the visible, the outward and perishable, to the Unseen, Spiritual, and Eternal, and, allying it with pure and great objects, makes it free.

I well know, that what I now say, may seem to some to want the sanction of experience. By many, religion is perhaps regarded as the last principle to give inward energy and freedom. I may be told of its threatenings, and of the bondage which they impose. I acknowledge that religion has threatenings, and it *must* have them; for evil, misery, is necessarily and unchangeably bound up with wrong-doing, with the abuse of moral power. From the nature of things, a mind disloyal to God and duty, must suffer; and religion, in uttering this, only re-echoes the plain teaching of conscience. But let it be remembered, that the single end of the threatenings of religion, is to make us spiritually free. They are all directed against the passions which enthrall and degrade us. They are weapons given to conscience, with which to fight the good fight, and to establish its throne within us. When not thus used, they are turned from their end; and if by injudicious preaching they engender superstition, let not the fault be laid at the door of religion.

I do not indeed wonder that so many doubt the power of religion to give strength, dignity, and freedom to the

mind. What bears this name too often yields no such fruits. Here, religion is a form, a round of prayers and rites, an attempt to propitiate God by flattery and fawning. There, it is terror and subjection to a minister or priest; and there, it is a violence of emotion, bearing away the mind like a whirlwind, and robbing it of self-direction. But true religion disclaims connexion with these usurpers of its name. It is a calm, deep conviction of God's paternal interest in the improvement, happiness, and honor of his creatures; a practical persuasion, that he delights in virtue and not in forms and flatteries, and that he especially delights in resolute effort to conform ourselves to the disinterested love and rectitude which constitute his own glory. It is for this religion, that I claim the honor of giving dignity and freedom to the mind.

The need of religion to accomplish this work, is in no degree superseded by what is called the progress of society. I should say that civilization, so far from being able of itself to give moral strength and elevation, includes causes of degradation, which nothing but the religious principle can withstand. It multiplies, undoubtedly, the comforts and enjoyments of life; but in these I see sore trials and perils to the soul. These minister to the sensual element in human nature, to that part of our constitution, which allies, and too often enslaves us, to the earth. Of consequence, civilization needs, that proportional aid should be given to the spiritual element in man, and I know not where it is to be found but in religion. Without this, the civilized man, with all his properties and refinements, rises little in true dignity above the savage whom he disdains. You tell me of civilization, of its arts and sciences, as the sure instruments of human

elevation. You tell me, how by these man masters and bends to his use the powers of nature. I know he masters them, but it is to become in turn their slave. He explores and cultivates the earth, but it is to grow more earthly. He explores the hidden mine, but it is to forge himself chains. He visits all regions, but therefore lives a stranger to his own soul. In the very progress of civilization, I see the need of an antagonist principle to the senses, of a power to free man from matter, to recall him from the outward to the inward world ; and religion alone is equal to so great a work.

The advantages of civilization have their peril. In such a state of society, opinion and law impose salutary restraint, and produce general order and security. But the power of opinion grows into a despotism, which more than all things, represses original and free thought, subverts individuality of character, reduces the community to a spiritless monotony, and chills the love of perfection. Religion, considered simply as the principle, which balances the power of human opinion, which takes man out of the grasp of custom and fashion, and teaches him to refer himself to a higher tribunal, is an infinite aid to moral strength and elevation.

An important benefit of civilization, of which we hear much from the political economist, is the division of labor, by which arts are perfected. But this, by confining the mind to an unceasing round of petty operations, tends to break it into littleness. We possess improved fabrics, but deteriorated men. Another advantage of civilization is, that manners are refined, and accomplishments multiplied ; but these are continually seen to supplant simplicity of character, strength of feeling, the love of nature, the love of inward beauty and glory. Under outward

courtesy, we see a cold selfishness, a spirit of calculation, and little energy of love.

I confess I look round on civilized society with many fears, and with more and more earnest desire, that a regenerating spirit from heaven, from religion, may descend upon and pervade it. I particularly fear, that various causes are acting powerfully among ourselves, to inflame and madden that enslaving and degrading principle, the passion for property. For example, the absence of hereditary distinctions in our country, gives prominence to the distinction of wealth, and holds up this as the chief prize to ambition. Add to this the epicurean, self-indulgent habits, which our prosperity has multiplied, and which crave insatiably for enlarging wealth as the only means of gratification. This peril is increased by the spirit of our times, which is a spirit of commerce, industry, internal improvements, mechanical invention, political economy, and peace. Think not that I would disparage commerce, mechanical skill, and especially pacific connexions among states. But there is danger that these blessings may by perversion issue in a slavish love of lucre. It seems to me, that some of the objects which once moved men most powerfully, are gradually losing their sway, and thus the mind is left more open to the excitement of wealth. For example, military distinction is taking the inferior place which it deserves; and the consequence will be, that the energy and ambition, which have been exhausted in war, will seek new directions; and happy shall we be if they do not flow into the channel of gain. So I think that political eminence is to be less and less coveted; and there is danger that the energies absorbed by it will be spent in seeking another kind of dominion, the dominion of property. And if such

be the result, what shall we gain by what is called the progress of society? What shall we gain by national peace, if men, instead of meeting on the field of battle, wage with one another the more inglorious strife of dishonest and rapacious traffic? What shall we gain by the waning of political ambition, if the intrigues of the exchange take place of those of the cabinet, and private pomp and luxury be substituted for the splendor of public life? I am no foe to civilization. I rejoice in its progress. But I mean to say, that, without a pure religion to modify its tendencies, to inspire and refine it, we shall be corrupted, not ennobled by it. It is the excellence of the religious principle, that it aids and carries forward civilization, extends science and arts, multiplies the conveniences and ornaments of life, and at the same time spoils them of their enslaving power, and even converts them into means and ministers of that spiritual freedom, which, when left to themselves, they endanger and destroy.

In order, however, that religion should yield its full and best fruits, one thing is necessary; and the times require that I should state it with great distinctness. It is necessary that religion should be held and professed in a liberal spirit. Just as far as it assumes an intolerant, exclusive, sectarian form, it subverts, instead of strengthening, the soul's freedom, and becomes the heaviest and most galling yoke which is laid on the intellect and conscience. Religion must be viewed, not as a monopoly of priests, ministers, or sects, not as conferring on any man a right to dictate to his fellow-beings, not as an instrument by which the few may awe the many, not as bestowing on one a prerogative which is not enjoyed by all, but as the property of every human being, and as the

great subject for every human mind. It must be regarded as the revelation of a common Father, to whom all have equal access, who invites all to the like immediate communion, who has no favorites, who has appointed no infallible expounders of his will, who opens his works and word to every eye, and calls upon all to read for themselves, and to follow fearlessly the best convictions of their own understandings. Let religion be seized on by individuals or sects, as their special province; let them clothe themselves with God's prerogative of judgment; let them succeed in enforcing their creed by penalties of law, or penalties of opinion; let them succeed in fixing a brand on virtuous men, whose only crime is free investigation; and religion becomes the most blighting tyranny which can establish itself over the mind. You have all heard of the outward evils, which religion, when thus turned into tyranny, has inflicted; how it has dug dreary dungeons, kindled fires for the martyr, and invented instruments of exquisite torture. But to me all this is less fearful than its influence over the mind. When I see the superstitions which it has fastened on the conscience, the spiritual terrors with which it has haunted and subdued the ignorant and susceptible, the dark, appalling views of God which it has spread far and wide, the dread of inquiry which it has struck into superior understandings, and the servility of spirit which it has made to pass for piety, — when I see all this, the fire, the scaffold, and the outward inquisition, terrible as they are, seem to me inferior evils. I look with a solemn joy on the heroic spirits, who have met freely and fearlessly pain and death in the cause of truth and human rights. But there are other victims of intolerance, on whom I look with unmixed sorrow. They are those, who, spell-bound by

early prejudice, or by intimidations from the pulpit and the press, dare not think; who anxiously stifle every doubt or misgiving in regard to their opinions, as if to doubt were a crime; who shrink from the seekers after truth as from infection; who deny all virtue, which does not wear the livery of their own sect; who, surrendering to others their best powers, receive unresistingly a teaching which wars against reason and conscience; and who think it a merit to impose on such as live within their influence, the grievous bondage, which they bear themselves. How much to be deplored is it, that religion, the very principle which is designed to raise men above the judgment and power of man, should become the chief instrument of usurpation over the soul.

Is it said, that in this country, where the rights of private judgment, and of speaking and writing according to our convictions, are guarantied with every solemnity by institutions and laws, religion can never degenerate into tyranny; that here its whole influence must conspire to the liberation and dignity of the mind? I answer, we discover little knowledge of human nature, if we ascribe to constitutions the power of charming to sleep the spirit of intolerance and exclusion. Almost every other bad passion may sooner be put to rest; and for this plain reason, that intolerance always shelters itself under the name and garb of religious zeal. Because we live in a country, where the gross, outward, visible chain is broken, we must not conclude that we are necessarily free. There are chains not made of iron, which eat more deeply into the soul. An espionage of bigotry may as effectually close our lips and chill our hearts, as an armed and hundred-eyed police.

There are countless ways by which men in a free country may encroach on their neighbours' rights. In religion, the instrument is ready made and always at hand. I refer to opinion, combined and organized in sects, and swayed by the clergy. We say we have no Inquisition. But a sect skilfully organized, trained to utter one cry, combined to cover with reproach whoever may differ from themselves, to drown the free expression of opinion by denunciations of heresy, and to strike terror into the multitude by joint and perpetual menace, — such a sect is as perilous and palsying to the intellect as the Inquisition. It serves the ministers as effectually as the sword. The present age is notoriously sectarian, and therefore hostile to liberty. One of the strongest features of our times, is the tendency of men to run into associations, to lose themselves in masses, to think and act in crowds, to act from the excitement of numbers, to sacrifice individuality, to identify themselves with parties and sects. At such a period, we ought to fear, and cannot too much dread, lest a host should be marshalled under some sectarian standard, so numerous and so strong, as to overawe opinion, stifle inquiry, compel dissenters to a prudent silence, and thus accomplish the end, without incurring the odium, of penal laws. We have indeed no small protection against this evil, in the multiplicity of sects. But let us not forget, that coalitions are as practicable and as perilous in church as in state; and that minor differences, as they are called, may be sunk, for the purpose of joint exertion against a common foe. Happily, the spirit of this people, in spite of all narrowing influences, is essentially liberal. Here lies our safety. The liberal spirit of the people, I trust, is more and

more to temper and curb that exclusive spirit, which is the besetting sin of their religious guides.

In this connexion I may be permitted to say, and I say it with heartfelt joy, that the government of this Commonwealth has uniformly distinguished itself by the spirit of religious freedom. Intolerance, however rife abroad, has found no shelter in our halls of legislation. As yet, no sentence of proscription has been openly or indirectly passed on any body of men for religious opinions. A wise and righteous jealousy has watched over our religious liberties, and been startled by the first movement, the faintest sign, of sectarian ambition. Our Commonwealth can boast no higher glory. May none of us live to see it fade away.

I have spoken with great freedom of the sectarian and exclusive spirit of our age. I would earnestly recommend liberality of feeling and judgment towards men of different opinions. But, in so doing, I intend not to teach, that opinions are of small moment, or that we should make no effort for spreading such as we deem the truth of God. I do mean, however, that we are to spread them by means which will not enslave ourselves to a party, or bring others into bondage. We must respect alike our own and others' minds. We must not demand a uniformity in religion which exists nowhere else, but expect, and be willing, that the religious principle, like other principles of our nature, should manifest itself in different methods and degrees. Let us not forget, that spiritual, like animal life, may subsist and grow under various forms. Whilst earnestly recommending what we deem the pure and primitive faith, let us remember, that those who differ in word or speculation, may agree in heart; that the spirit of Chris-

tianity, though mixed and encumbered with error, is still divine; and that sects which assign different ranks to Jesus Christ, may still adore that godlike virtue, which constituted him the glorious representative of his Father. Under the disguises of Papal and Protestant Creeds, let us learn to recognise the lovely aspect of Christianity, and rejoice to believe, that, amidst dissonant forms and voices, the common Father discerns and accepts the same deep filial adoration. This is true freedom and enlargement of mind, a liberty which he who knows it would not barter for the widest dominion which priests and sects have usurped over the human soul.

I have spoken of Religion; I pass to Government, another great means of promoting that spiritual liberty, that moral strength and elevation, which we have seen to be our supreme good. I thus speak of government, not because it always promotes this end, but because it may and should thus operate. Civil institutions should be directed chiefly to a moral or spiritual good, and, until this truth is felt, they will continue, I fear, to be perverted into instruments of crime and misery. Other views of their design, I am aware, prevail. We are sometimes told, that government has no purpose but an earthly one; that, whilst religion takes care of the soul, government is to watch over outward and bodily interests. This separation of our interests into earthly and spiritual, seems to me unfounded. There is a unity in our whole being. There is one great end for which body and mind were created, and all the relations of life were ordained; one central aim, to which our whole being should tend; and this is the unfolding of our intellectual and moral nature; and no man thoroughly understands government, but he who reverences it as

a part of God's stupendous machinery for this sublime design. I do not deny that government is instituted to watch over our present interests. But still it has a spiritual or moral purpose, because present interests are, in an important sense, spiritual; that is, they are instruments and occasions of virtue, calls to duty, sources of obligation, and are only blessings when they contribute to the health of the soul. For example, property, the principal object of legislation, is the material, if I may so speak, on which justice acts, or through which this cardinal virtue is exercised and expressed; and property has no higher end than to invigorate, by calling forth, the principle of impartial rectitude.

Government is the great organ of civil society, and we should appreciate the former more justly, if we better understood the nature and foundation of the latter. I say, then, that society is throughout a moral institution. It is something very different from an assemblage of animals feeding in the same pasture. It is the combination of rational beings for the security of right. Right, a moral idea, lies at the very foundation of civil communities; and the highest happiness which they confer, is the gratification of moral affections. We are sometimes taught, that society is the creature of compact, and selfish calculation; that men agree to live together for the protection of private interests. But no. Society is of earlier and higher origin. It is God's ordinance, and answers to what is most godlike in our nature. The chief ties that hold men together in communities, are not self-interests, or compacts, or positive institutions, or force. They are invisible, refined, spiritual ties, bonds of the mind and heart. Our best powers and affections crave instinctively for society as the sphere in which

they are to find their life and happiness. That men may greatly strengthen and improve society by written constitutions, I readily grant. There is, however, a constitution which precedes all of men's making, and after which all others are to be formed; a constitution, the great lines of which are drawn in our very nature; a primitive law of justice, rectitude, and philanthropy, which all other laws are bound to enforce, and from which all others derive their validity and worth.

Am I now asked, how government is to promote energy and elevation of moral principle? I answer, not by making the various virtues matters of legislation, not by preaching morals, not by establishing religion; for these are not its appropriate functions. It is to serve the cause of spiritual freedom, not by teaching or persuasion, but by action; that is, by rigidly conforming itself, in all its measures, to the moral or Christian law; by the most public and solemn manifestations of reverence for right, for justice, for the general weal, for the principles of virtue. Government is the most conspicuous of human institutions, and were moral rectitude written on its front, stamped conspicuously on all its operations, an immense power would be added to pure principle in the breasts of individuals.

To be more particular, a government may, and should, ennoble the mind of the citizen, by continually holding up to him the idea of the general good. This idea should be impressed in characters of light on all legislation; and a government directing itself resolutely and steadily to this end, becomes a minister of virtue. It teaches the citizen to attach a sanctity to the public weal, carries him beyond selfish regards, nourishes magnanimity, and the purpose of sacrificing himself, as far

as virtue will allow, to the commonwealth. On the other hand, a government which wields its power for selfish interests, which sacrifices the many to a few, or the state to a party, becomes a public preacher of crime, taints the mind of the citizen, does its utmost to make him base and venal, and prepares him, by its example, to sell or betray that public interest for which he should be ready to die.

Again, on government, more than on any institution, depends that most important principle, the sense of justice in the community. To promote this, it should express, in all its laws, a reverence for right, and an equal reverence for the rights of high and low, of rich and poor. It should choose to sacrifice the most dazzling advantages, rather than break its own faith, rather than unsettle the fixed laws of property, or in any way shock the sentiment of justice in the community.

Let me add one more method by which government is to lift up and enlarge the minds of its citizens. In its relations to other governments, it should inviolably adhere to the principles of justice and philanthropy. By its moderation, sincerity, uprightness, and pacific spirit towards foreign states, by abstaining from secret arts and unfair advantages, by cultivating free and mutually beneficial intercourse, it should cherish among its citizens the ennobling consciousness of belonging to the human family, and of having a common interest with the whole human race. Government only fulfils its end, when it thus joins with Christianity in inculcating the law of universal love.

Unhappily, governments have seldom recognised as the highest duty, the obligation of strengthening pure and noble principle in the community. I fear, they are even

to be numbered among the chief agents in corrupting nations. Of all the doctrines by which vice has propagated itself, I know none more pernicious than the maxim, that statesmen are exempted from the common restraints of morality, that nations are not equally bound with individuals by the eternal laws of justice and philanthropy. Through this doctrine, vice has lifted its head unblushingly in the most exalted stations. Vice has seated itself on the throne. The men who have wielded the power and riveted the gaze of nations, have lent the sanction of their greatness to crime. In the very heart of nations, in the cabinet of rulers, has been bred a moral pestilence, which has infected and contaminated all orders of the state. Through the example of rulers, private men have learned to regard the everlasting law as a temporary conventional rule, and been blinded to the supremacy of virtue.

That the prosperity of a people is intimately connected with this reverence for virtue, which I have inculcated on legislators, is most true, and cannot be too deeply felt. There is no foundation for the vulgar doctrine, that a state may flourish by arts and crimes. Nations and individuals are subjected to one law. The moral principle is the life of communities. No calamity can befall a people so great, as temporary success through a criminal policy, as the hope thus cherished of trampling with impunity on the authority of God. Sooner or later, insulted virtue avenges itself terribly on states as well as on private men. We hope, indeed, security and the quiet enjoyment of our wealth, from our laws and institutions. But civil laws find their chief sanction in the law written within by the finger of God. In proportion as a people enslave themselves to sin, the foun-

tain of public justice becomes polluted. The most wholesome statutes, wanting the support of public opinion, grow impotent. Self-seekers, unprincipled men, by flattering bad passions, and by darkening the public mind, usurp the seat of judgment and places of power and trust, and turn free institutions into lifeless forms or instruments of oppression. I especially believe, that communities suffer sorely by that species of immorality which the herd of statesmen have industriously cherished as of signal utility, I mean, by hostile feeling towards other countries. The common doctrine has been, that prejudice and enmity towards foreign states, are means of fostering a national spirit, and of confirming union at home. But bad passions, once instilled into a people, will never exhaust themselves abroad. Vice never yields the fruits of virtue. Injustice to strangers does not breed justice to our friends. Malignity, in every form, is a fire of hell, and the policy which feeds it, is infernal. Domestic feuds and the madness of party are its natural and necessary issues ; and a people hostile to others, will demonstrate in its history, that no form of inhumanity or injustice, escapes its just retribution.

Our great error as a people is, that we put an idolatrous trust in our free institutions ; as if these, by some magic power, must secure our rights, however we enslave ourselves to evil passions. We need to learn that the forms of liberty are not its essence ; that, whilst the letter of a free constitution is preserved, its spirit may be lost ; that even its wisest provisions and most guarded powers may be made weapons of tyranny. In a country called free, a majority may become a faction, and a proscribed minority may be insulted, robbed, and oppressed. Under elective governments, a dominant party

may become as truly a usurper, and as treasonably conspire against the state, as an individual who forces his way by arms to the throne.

I know that it is supposed, that political wisdom can so form institutions, as to extract from them freedom, notwithstanding a people's sins. The chief expedient for this purpose has been, to balance, as it is called, men's passions and interests against each other, to use one man's selfishness as a check against his neighbour's, to produce peace by the counteraction and equilibrium of hostile forces. This whole theory I distrust. The vices can by no management or skilful poising be made to do the work of virtue. Our own history has already proved this. Our government was founded on the doctrine of checks and balances; and what does experience teach us? It teaches, what the principles of our nature might have taught, that, whenever the country is divided into two great parties, the dominant party will possess itself of both branches of the legislature, and of the different departments of the state, and will move towards its objects with as little check, and with as determined purpose, as if all powers were concentrated in a single body. There is no substitute for virtue. Free institutions secure rights, only when secured by, and when invigorating that spiritual freedom, that moral power and elevation, which I have set before you as the supreme good of our nature.

According to these views, the first duty of a statesman is to build up the moral energy of a people. This is their first interest; and he who weakens it, inflicts an injury which no talent can repair; nor should any splendor of services, or any momentary success, avert from him the infamy which he has earned. Let public

men learn to think more reverently of their function. Let them feel that they are touching more vital interests than property. Let them fear nothing so much as to sap the moral convictions of a people, by unrighteous legislation, or a selfish policy. Let them cultivate in themselves the spirit of religion and virtue, as the first requisite to public station. Let no apparent advantage to the community, any more than to themselves, seduce them to the infraction of any moral law. Let them put faith in virtue as the strength of nations. Let them not be disheartened by temporary ill success in upright exertion. Let them remember, that while they and their contemporaries live but for a day, the state is to live for ages; and that Time, the unerring arbiter, will vindicate the wisdom as well as the magnanimity of the public man, who, confiding in the power of truth, justice, and philanthropy, asserts their claims, and reverently follows their monitions, amidst general disloyalty and corruption.

I have hitherto spoken of the general influence which government should exert on the moral interests of a people, by expressing reverence for the moral law in its whole policy and legislation. It is also bound to exert a more particular and direct influence. I refer to its duty of preventing and punishing crime. This is one of the chief ends of government, but it has received as yet very little of the attention which it deserves. Government, indeed, has not been slow to punish crime, nor has society suffered for want of dungeons and gibbets. But the prevention of crime and the reformation of the offender have nowhere taken rank among the first objects of legislation. Penal codes, breathing vengeance, and too often written in blood, have been set

in array against the violence of human passions, and the legislator's conscience has been satisfied with enacting these. Whether by shocking humanity he has not multiplied offenders, is a question into which he would do wisely to inquire.

On the means of preventing crime, I want time, and still more ability, to enlarge. I would only say, that this object should be kept in view through the whole of legislation. For this end, laws should be as few and as simple as may be; for an extensive and obscure code multiplies occasions of offence, and brings the citizen unnecessarily into collision with the state. Above all, let the laws bear broadly on their front the impress of justice and humanity, so that the moral sense of the community may become their sanction. Arbitrary and oppressive laws invite offence, and take from disobedience the consciousness of guilt. It is even wise to abstain from laws, which, however wise and good in themselves, have the semblance of inequality, which find no response in the heart of the citizen, and which will be evaded with little remorse. The wisdom of legislation is especially seen in grafting laws on conscience. I add, what seems to me of great importance, that the penal code should be brought to bear with the sternest impartiality on the rich and exalted, as well as on the poor and fallen. Society suffers from the crimes of the former, not less than by those of the latter. It has been truly said, that the amount of property taken by theft and forgery, is small compared with what is taken by dishonest insolvency. Yet the thief is sent to prison, and the dishonest bankrupt lives perhaps in state. The moral sentiment of the community is thus corrupted; and, for this and other solemn rea-

sons, a reform is greatly needed in the laws which respect insolvency. I am shocked at the imprisonment of the honest debtor; and the legislation, which allows a creditor to play the tyrant over an innocent man, would disgrace, I think, a barbarous age. I am not less shocked by the impunity with which criminal insolvents continually escape, and by the lenity of the community towards these transgressors of its most essential laws.

Another means of preventing crime, is to punish it wisely; and by wise punishment, I mean that which aims to reform the offender. I know that this end of punishment has been questioned by wise and good men. But what higher or more practicable end can be proposed? You say, we must punish for example. But history shows that what is called examplary punishment cannot boast of great efficiency. Crime thrives under severe penalties, thrives on the blood of offenders. The frequent exhibition of such punishments hardens a people's heart, and produces defiance and reaction in the guilty. Until recently, government seems to have labored to harden the criminal by throwing him into a crowd of offenders, into the putrid atmosphere of a common prison. Humanity rejoices in the reform, which, in this respect, is spreading through our country. To remove the convict from bad influences is an essential step to his moral restoration. It is however but a step. To place him under the aid of good influence is equally important; and here individual exertion must come to the aid of legislative provisions. Private Christians, selected at once for their judiciousness and philanthropy, must connect themselves with the solitary prisoner, and by manifestations of a sincere fraternal

interest, by conversation, books, and encouragement, must touch within him chords which have long ceased to vibrate; must awaken new hopes; must show him that all is not lost, that God, and Christ, and virtue, and the friendship of the virtuous, and honor, and immortality, may yet be secured. Of this glorious ministry of private Christianity, I do not despair. I know I shall be told of the failure of all efforts to reclaim criminals. They have not always failed. And besides, has philanthropy, has genius, has the strength of humanity, been fairly and fervently put forth in this great concern? I find in the New Testament no class of human beings whom charity is instructed to forsake. I find no exception made by Him who came to seek and save that which was lost. I must add, that the most hopeless subjects are not always to be found in prisons. That convicts are dreadfully corrupt, I know; but not more corrupt than some who walk at large, and are not excluded from our kindness. The rich man who defrauds is certainly as criminal as the poor man who steals. The rich man who drinks to excess contracts deeper guilt, than he who sinks into this vice under the pressure of want. The young man who seduces innocence, deserves more richly the House of Correction, than the unhappy female whom he allured into the path of destruction. Still more, I cannot but remember how much the guilt of the convict results from the general corruption of society. When I reflect, how much of the responsibility for crimes rests on the state, how many of the offences, which are most severely punished, are to be traced to neglected education, to early squalid want, to temptations and exposures which society might do much to relieve, — I feel that a spirit

of mercy should temper legislation; that we should not sever ourselves so widely from our fallen brethren; that we should recognise in them the countenance and claims of humanity; that we should strive to win them back to God.

I have thus spoken of the obligation of government to contribute by various means to the moral elevation of a people. I close this head with expressing sorrow, that an institution, capable of such purifying influences, should so often be among the chief engines of a nation's corruption.

In this discourse I have insisted on the supreme importance of virtuous principle, of moral force, and elevation in the community; and I have thus spoken, not that I might conform to professional duty, but from deep personal conviction. I feel, as I doubt not many feel, that the great distinction of a nation, the only one worth possessing, and which brings after it all other blessings, is the prevalence of pure principle among the citizens. I wish to belong to a state, in the character and institutions of which I may find a spring of improvement, which I can speak of with an honest pride, in whose records I may meet great and honored names, and which is making the world its debtor by its discoveries of truth, and by an example of virtuous freedom. O save me from a country which worships wealth, and cares not for true glory; in which intrigue bears rule; in which patriotism borrows its zeal from the prospect of office; in which hungry sycophants besiege with supplication all the departments of state; in which public men bear the brand of vice, and the seat of government is a noisome sink of private licentiousness and political corruption. Tell me not of the honor of belonging to

a free country. I ask, does our liberty bear generous fruits? Does it exalt us in manly spirit, in public virtue, above countries trodden under foot by despotism? Tell me not of the extent of our territory. I care not how large it is, if it multiply degenerate men. Speak not of our prosperity. Better be one of a poor people, plain in manners, revering God and respecting themselves, than belong to a rich country which knows no higher good than riches. Earnestly do I desire for this country, that, instead of copying Europe with an undiscerning servility, it may have a character of its own, corresponding to the freedom and equality of our institutions. One Europe is enough. One Paris is enough. How much to be desired is it, that, separated as we are from the eastern continent by an ocean, we should be still more widely separated by simplicity of manners, by domestic purity, by inward piety, by reverence for human nature, by moral independence, by withstanding that subjection to fashion and that debilitating sensuality, which characterize the most civilized portions of the old world.

Of this country I may say with peculiar emphasis, that its happiness is bound up in its virtue. On this our union can alone stand firm. Our union is not like that of other nations, confirmed by the habits of ages, and riveted by force. It is a recent, and still more, a voluntary union. It is idle to talk of force as binding us together. Nothing can retain a member of this confederacy, when resolved on separation. The only bonds that can permanently unite us, are moral ones. That there are repulsive powers, principles of discord, in these States, we all feel. The attraction which is to counteract them, is only to be found in a calm wis-

dom, controlling the passions, in a spirit of equity and regard to the common weal, and in virtuous patriotism, clinging to union as the only pledge of freedom and peace. The union is threatened by sectional jealousies, and collisions of local interests, which can be reconciled only by a magnanimous liberality. It is endangered by the prostitution of executive patronage, through which the public treasury is turned into a fountain of corruption, and by the lust for power, which perpetually convulses the country for the sake of throwing office into new hands; and the only remedy for these evils, is to be found in the moral indignation of the community, in a pure, lofty spirit, which will overwhelm with infamy this selfish ambition.

To the Chief Magistrate of this Commonwealth, and to those associated with him in the Executive and Legislative departments, I respectfully commend the truths which have now been delivered; and, with the simplicity becoming a minister of Jesus Christ, I would remind them of their solemn obligations to God, to their fellow-creatures, and to the interests of humanity, freedom, virtue, and religion. We trust that in their high stations, they will seek, not themselves, but the public weal, and will seek it by inflexible adherence to the principles of the Constitution, and still more to the principles of God's Everlasting Law.

SELF-DENIAL.

MATTHEW xvi. 24: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

THIS passage is an example of our Saviour's mode of teaching. He has given us his truth in the costume of the age; and this style is so common in the New Testament, that an acquaintance with the usages of those times is necessary to the understanding of a large part of his instructions. The cross was then a mode of punishment reserved for the greatest criminals, and was intended to inflict the deepest disgrace as well as sorest pain. "To take up the cross" had therefore become a proverbial expression of the most dreaded suffering and shame. By this phrase in the text, Jesus intended to teach, that no man could become his disciple without such a deep conviction of the truth and excellence of his religion, as would fortify the mind against persecution, reproach, and death. The command "to deny ourselves" is more literal, but is an instance of what is very common in our Saviour's teaching, I mean, of the use of unlimited expressions, which require to be restrained by the good sense of the hearer, and which, if taken without consid-

erable modification, may lead into pernicious error. We know that this precept, for want of a wise caution, has driven men to self-inflicted penance and to the austerities of the cloister and wilderness; and it is one among many proofs of the necessity of a calm and sober judgment to a beneficial use of Christianity.

In this discourse I shall offer remarks on the limits or just extent of Christian Self-denial, and on the design of Providence in so constituting us, as to make self-denial necessary; and in discussing these topics I shall set before you its obligation, necessity, and excellence.

We are to deny ourselves; but how far? to what extent? This is our first inquiry. Are we to deny ourselves wholly? To deny ourselves in every power, faculty, and affection of our nature? Has the duty no bounds? For example, are we to deny the highest part of our nature, I mean conscience, or the moral faculty? Are we to oppose our sense of right, or desire of virtue? Every Christian says, No. Conscience is sacred; and revelation is intended to quicken, not resist it.

Again, are we to deny reason, the intellectual faculty, by which we weigh evidence, trace out causes and effects, ascend to universal truths, and seek to establish harmony among all our views? The answer to this question seems as plain as to the former. Yet many good men have seemed to dread reason, have imagined an inconsistency between faith and a free use of our intellectual powers, and have insisted that it is a religious duty "to prostrate our understandings." To some this may even seem a principal branch of Christian self-denial. The error I think is a great one; and believing that the honor, progress, and beneficial influence of Christianity are involved in its removal, I wish to give it a brief consideration.

I am told that I must deny reason. I ask, Must I deny it, when it teaches me that there is a God? if so, the very foundation of religion is destroyed, and I am abandoned to utter unbelief. Again, must I deny reason when it forbids the literal interpretation of the text, which commands us to hate father and mother and our own lives? If so, I must rupture the most sacred ties of domestic life, and must add to social vices the crime of self-murder. Surely reason, in its teachings on these great subjects, is not to be denied, but revered and obeyed; and if revered here, where ought it to be contemned and renounced?

I am told, that we have a better guide than reason, even God's word, and that this is to be followed and the other denied. But I ask, How do I know that Christianity is God's word? Are not the evidences of this religion submitted to reason? and if this faculty be unworthy of trust, is not revelation necessarily involved in the same condemnation? The truth is, and it ought not to be disguised, that our ultimate reliance is, and must be, on our own reason. Faith in this power lies at the foundation of all other faith. No trust can be placed in God, if we discredit the faculty by which God is discerned. — I have another objection to the doctrine, that we must deny reason in order to follow revelation. Reason is the very faculty to which revelation is addressed, and by which alone it can be explained. Without it we should be incapable of divine teaching, just as without the eye we should lose the happiest influences of the sun; and they who would discourage the use of reason, that we may better receive revelation, are much like those, who should bind up or pluck out the eye, that we might enjoy to the full the splendor of day.

Perhaps I shall be pointed to the many and gross errors into which reason has fallen on almost every subject, and shall be told that here are motives for distrusting and denying it. I reply, first, by asking how we detect these errors. By what power do we learn that reason so often misguides us? Is it not by reason itself? and shall we renounce it on account of its capacity of rectifying its own wrong judgments? — Consider next, that on no subject has reason gone more astray than in the interpretation of the Scriptures; so that if it is to be denied on account of its errors, we must especially debar it from the study of revelation; in other words, we must shut the word of God in despair, a consequence which, to a Protestant, is a sufficient refutation of the doctrine from which it flows.

A common method of enforcing the denial of reason, is to contrast it with the Infinite Intelligence of God, and then to ask whether it can be prostrated too submissively, or renounced too humbly, before Him. I acknowledge reverently the immeasurable superiority of God to human reason; but I do not therefore contemn or renounce it; for, in the first place, it is as true of the "rapt seraph" as of man, that his intelligence is most narrow, compared with the Divine. Is no honor therefore due to angelic wisdom? In the next place, I observe that human reason, imperfect though it be, is still the offspring of God, allied to him intimately, and worthy of its divine Parent. There is no extravagance in calling it, as is sometimes done, "a beam of the infinite light"; for it involves in its very essence those immutable and everlasting principles of truth and rectitude, which constitute the glory of the Divine Mind. It ascends to the sublime idea of God by possessing kindred

attributes, and knows him only through its affinity with him. It carries within itself the germ of that spiritual perfection, which is the great end of the creation. Is it not, then, truly a "partaker of a divine nature"? Can we think or speak of it too gratefully or with too much respect? — The Infinity of God, so far from calling on me to prostrate and annihilate reason, exalts my conception of it. It is my faith in this perfection of the Divine Mind, that inspires me with reverence for the human, for they are intimately connected, the latter being a derivation from the former, and endued with the power of approaching its original more and more through eternity. Severed from God, reason would lose its grandeur. In his infinity it has at once a source and a pledge of endless and unbounded improvement. God delights to communicate himself; and therefore his greatness, far from inspiring contempt for human reason, gives it a sacredness, and opens before it the most elevating hopes. The error of men is, not that they exaggerate, but that they do not know or suspect, the worth and dignity of their rational nature.

Perhaps I shall be told, that reason is not to be denied universally, but only in cases where its teachings are contradicted by revelation. To this I reply, that a contradiction between reason and a genuine revelation cannot exist. A doctrine claiming a divine origin would refute itself, by opposing any of the truths which reason intuitively discerns, or which it gathers from nature. God is the "Father of lights" and the "Author of concord," and he cannot darken and distract the human mind by jarring and irreconcilable instructions. He cannot subvert the authority of the very faculty through which we arrive at the knowledge of himself. A reve-

lation from the Author of our rational nature, will certainly be adapted to its fundamental laws. I am aware, that it is very possible to give the name of reason to rash prejudices and corrupt opinions, and that on this ground we may falsely pronounce a genuine revelation to be inconsistent with reason; and our liableness to this delusion binds us to judge calmly, cautiously, and in the fear of God. But if, after a deliberate and impartial use of our best faculties, a professed revelation seems to us plainly to disagree with itself or to clash with great principles which we cannot question, we ought not to hesitate to withhold from it our belief. I am surer that my rational nature is from God, than that any book is an expression of his will. This light in my own breast is his primary revelation, and all subsequent ones must accord with it, and are in fact intended to blend with and brighten it. My hearers, as you value Christianity, never speak of it as in any thing opposed to man's rational nature. Join not its foes in casting on it this reproach. It was given, not to supersede our rational faculties, but to quicken and invigorate them, to open a wider field to thought, to bring peace into the intellect as well as into the heart, to give harmony to all our views. We grievously wrong Christianity, by supposing it to raise a standard against reason, or to demand the sacrifice of our noblest faculties. These are her allies, friends, kindred. With these she holds unalterable concord. Whenever doctrines are taught you from the Christian records, opposing any clear conviction of reason and conscience, be assured that it is not the teaching of Christ which you hear. Some rash human expounder is subsituting his own weak, discordant tones for the voice of God, which they

no more resemble than the rattling chariot-wheel does Heaven's awful thunder. — Never, never do violence to your rational nature. He who in any case admits doctrines which contradict reason, has broken down the great barrier between truth and falsehood, and lays open his mind to every delusion. The great mark of error, which is inconsistency, ceases to shock him. He has violated the first law of the intellect, and must pay the fearful penalty. Happy will it be for him, if, by the renunciation of reason, he be not prepared for the opposite extreme, and do not, through a natural reaction, rush into the excess of incredulity. In the records of individuals and of the race, it is not uncommon for an era of intellectual prostration to be followed by an era of proud and licentious philosophy; nor will this alternation cease to form this history of the human mind, till the just rights of reason be revered.

I will notice one more, and a very common one, in which the duty of denying reason is urged. We are told, that there is one case in which we ought to prostrate our understandings, and that is, the case of mysteries, whenever they are taught in the word of God. The answer to this popular language is short. Mysteries, *continuing such*, cannot, from their very nature, be believed, and of consequence reason incurs no blame in refusing them assent. This will appear by considering what a mystery is. In the language of Scripture, and in its true sense, it is a secret, something unknown. I say, then, that from its nature it cannot be an object of belief; for to know and to believe are expressions of the same act of the mind, differing chiefly in this, that the former is more applicable to what admits of demonstration, the latter to probable truth. I have no

disposition to deny the existence of mysteries. Every truth involves them. Every object which falls under our notice, the most common and simple, contains much that we do not know and cannot now penetrate. We know not, for example, what it is which holds together the particles of the meanest stone beneath our feet, nor the manner in which the humblest plant grows. That there are mysteries, secrets, things unknown without number, I should be the last to deny. I only maintain, and in so doing I utter an identical proposition, that what is mysterious, secret, unknown, cannot at the same time be known or an object of faith. It is a great and common error, to confound facts which we understand, with the mysteries which lurk under them, and to suppose that in believing the first we believe the last. But no two things are more distinct, nor does the most thorough knowledge of the one imply the least perception of the other. For example, my hand is moved by the act of my will. This is a plain fact. The words which convey it are among the most intelligible. I believe it without doubt. But under this fact, which I so well know, lies a great mystery. The *manner* in which the will acts on the hand, or the process which connects them, is altogether unknown. The fact and the mystery, as you see, have nothing in common. The former is so manifest, that I cannot, if I would, withhold from it my faith. Of the latter not even a glimpse is afforded me; not an idea of it has dawned on the mind; and without ideas, there can, of course, be no knowledge or belief. These remarks apply to revelation as well as to nature. The subjects of which revelation treats, God, Christ, human nature, holiness, heaven, contain infinite mysteries. What is revealed

in regard to them is indeed as nothing compared with what remains secret. But "secret things belong to God," and the pride of reason is manifested, not in declining, but in professing, to make them objects of faith. —It is the influence of time and of intellectual improvement to bring mysteries to light, both in nature and religion; and just as far as this process goes on, the belief of them becomes possible and right. Thus, the cause of eclipses, which was once a mystery, is now disclosed, and who of us does not believe it? In like manner Christ revealed "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," or the purposes and methods of God which had been kept secret for ages, in relation to the redemption of the world from sin, death, and woe. Being now revealed, or having ceased to be mysteries, these have become objects of faith, and reason ranks them among its most glorious truths.

From what has been said, we see, that to deny reason is no part of religion. Never imagine yourselves called to prostrate and contemn this noble nature. Reverence conscience. Foster, extend, enlighten intellect. Never imagine that you are forsaking God, in reposing a trust in the faculties he has given you. Only exercise them with impartiality, disinterestedness, and a supreme love of truth, and their instructions will conspire with revelation, and a beautiful harmony will more and more manifest itself in the lessons which God's book and God's works, which Christ and conscience teach.

But, if Reason and Conscience are not to be denied, what is? I answer, that there are other principles in our nature. Man is not wholly reason and conscience. He has various appetites, passions, desires, resting on present gratification and on outward objects; some of

which we possess in common with inferior animals, such as sensual appetites and anger ; and others belong more to the mind, such as love of power, love of honor, love of property, love of society, love of amusement, or a taste for literature and elegant arts ; but all referring to our present being, and terminating chiefly on ourselves, or on a few beings who are identified with ourselves. These are to be denied or renounced ; by which I mean not exterminated, but renounced as masters, guides, lords, and brought into strict and entire subordination to our moral and intellectual powers. It is a false idea, that religion requires the extermination of any principle, desire, appetite, or passion, which our Creator has implanted. Our nature is a whole, a beautiful whole, and no part can be spared. You might as properly and innocently lop off a limb from the body, as eradicate any natural desire from the mind. All our appetites are in themselves innocent and useful, ministering to the general weal of the soul. They are like the elements of the natural world, parts of a wise and beneficent system, but, like those elements, are beneficent only when restrained.

There are two remarks relating to our appetites and desires, which will show their need of frequent denial and constant control. In the first place, it is true of them all, that they do not carry within themselves their own rule. They are blind impulses. Present their objects, and they are excited as easily when gratification would be injurious as when it would be useful. We are not so constituted, for example, that we hunger and thirst for those things only which will be nutritive and wholesome, and lose all hunger and thirst at the moment when we have eaten or drunk enough. We are not so

made, that the desire of property springs up only when property can be gained by honest means, and that it declines and dies as soon as we have acquired a sufficiency for ourselves and for usefulness. Our desires are undiscerning instincts, generally directed to what is useful, but often clamoring for gratification, which would injure health, debilitate the mind, or oppose the general good; and this blindness of desire makes the demand for self-denial urgent and continual.

I pass to a second remark. Our appetites and desires carry with them a principle of growth or tendency to enlargement. They expand by indulgence, and, if not restrained, they fill and exhaust the soul, and hence are to be strictly watched over and denied. Nature has set bounds to the desires of the brute, but not to human desire, which partakes of the illimitableness of the soul to which it belongs. In brutes, for example, the animal appetites impel to a certain round of simple gratifications, beyond which they never pass. But man, having imagination and invention, is able by these noble faculties, to whet his sensual desires indefinitely. He is able to form new combinations of animal pleasures, and to provoke appetite by stimulants. The East gives up its spices, and the South holds not back its vintage. Sea and land are rifled for luxuries. Whilst the animal finds its nourishment in a few plants, perhaps in a single blade, man's table groans under the spoils of all regions; and the consequence is, that in not a few cases the whole strength of the soul runs into appetite, just as some rich soil shoots up into poisonous weeds, and man, the rational creature of God, degenerates into the most thorough sensualist. — As another illustration of the ten-

dency of our desires to grow and usurp the whole mind take the love of property. We see this every day gaining dangerous strength, if left to itself, if not denied or curbed. It is a thirst which is inflamed by the very copiousness of its draughts. Anxiety grows with possession. Riches become dearer by time. The love of money, far from withering in life's winter, strikes deeper and deeper root in the heart of age. He who has more than he can use or manage, grows more and more eager and restless for new gains, muses by day and dreams by night of wealth; and in this way the whole vigor of his soul, of intellect and affection, shoots up into an intense, unconquerable, and almost infinite passion for accumulation.

It is an interesting and solemn reflection, that the very nobleness of human nature may become the means and instrument of degradation. The powers which ally us to God, when pressed into the service of desire and appetite, enlarge desire into monstrous excess, and irritate appetite into fury. The rapidity of thought, the richness of imagination, the resources of invention, when enslaved to any passion, give it an extent and energy unknown to inferior natures; and just in proportion as this usurper establishes its empire over us, all the nobler attainments and products of the soul perish. Truth, virtue, honor, religion, hope, faith, charity, die. Here we see the need of self-denial. The lower principles of our nature not only act blindly, but, if neglected, grow indefinitely, and overshadow and blight and destroy every better growth. Without self-restraint and self-denial, the proportion, order, beauty, and harmony of the spiritual nature are subverted, and the soul becomes as monstrous and deformed, as the body would become.

were all the nutriment to flow into a few organs and these the least valuable, and to break out into loathsome excrescences, whilst the eye, the ear, and the active limbs should pine, and be palsied, and leave us without guidance or power.

Do any of you now ask, how it comes to pass that we are so constituted ; why we are formed with desires so blind and strong, and tending so constantly to enlargement and dominion ; and how we can reconcile this constitution with God's goodness ? This is our second question. Some will answer it, by saying, that this constitution is a sinful nature derived from our first parents ; that it comes not from God, but from Adam ; that it is a sad inheritance from the first fallen pair ; and that God is not to be blamed for it, but our original progenitor. But, I confess, this explanation does not satisfy me. Scripture says, it was God who made me, not Adam. What I was at birth, I was by the ordinance of God. Make the connexion between Adam and his posterity as close as you will, God must have intended it, and God has carried it into effect. My soul, at the moment of its creation, was as fresh from the hands of the Deity, as if no human parent had preceded me ; and I see not how to shift off on any other being the reproach of my nature, if it deserve reproach. But does it merit blame ? Is the tendency to excess and growth, which we are conscious of in our passions and appetites, any derogation from the goodness or wisdom of our Maker ? Can we find only evil in such a constitution ? Perhaps it may minister to the highest purpose of God.

It is true, that as we are now made, our appetites and desires often war against reason, conscience, and reli-

gion. But why is this warfare appointed? Not to extinguish these high principles; but to awaken and invigorate them. It is meant to give them a field for action, occasion for effort, and means of victory. True, virtue is thus opposed and endangered; but virtue owes its vigor and hardihood to obstacles, and wins its crown by conflict. I do not say, that God can find no school for character but temptation, and trial, and strong desire; but I do say, that the present state is a fit and noble school. You, my hearers, would have the path of virtue, from the very beginning, smooth and strewed with flowers; and would this train the soul to energy? You would have pleasure always coincide with duty; and how, then, would you attest your loyalty to duty? You would have conscience and desire always speak the same language, and prescribe the same path; and how, then, would conscience assert its supremacy? God has implanted blind desires, which often rise up against reason and conscience, that he may give to these high faculties the dignity of dominion and the joy of victory. He has surrounded us with rivals to himself, that we may love him freely, and by our own unfettered choice erect his throne in our souls. He has given us strong desires of inferior things, that the desire of excellence may grow stronger than all. Make such a world as you wish, let no appetite or passion ever resist God's will, no object of desire ever come in competition with duty; and where would be the resolution, and energy, and constancy, and effort, and purity, the trampling under foot of low interests, the generous self-surrender, the heroic devotion, all the sublimities of virtue, which now throw lustre over man's nature and speak of his immortality? You would blot the precept of self-denial from the

Scriptures, and the need of it from human life, and, in so doing, you would blot out almost every interesting passage in man's history. Let me ask you, when you read that history, what is it which most interests and absorbs you, which seizes on the imagination and memory, which agitates the soul to its centre? Who is the man whom you select from the records of time as the object of your special admiration? Is it he, who lived to indulge himself? whose current of life flowed most equably and pleasurably? whose desires were crowned most liberally with means of gratification? whose table was most luxuriantly spread? and whom fortune made the envy of his neighbourhood by the fulness of her gifts? Were such the men to whom monuments have been reared, and whose memories, freshened with tears of joy and reverence, grow and flourish and spread through every age? O no! He whom we love, whose honor we most covet, is he who has most denied and subdued himself; who has made the most entire sacrifice of appetites and passions and private interest to God, and virtue, and mankind; who has walked in a rugged path, and clung to good and great ends in persecution and pain; who, amidst the solicitations of ambition, ease, and private friendship, and the menaces of tyranny and malice, has listened to the voice of conscience, and found a recompense for blighted hopes and protracted suffering, in conscious uprightness and the favor of God. Who is it that is most lovely in domestic life? It is the Martyr to domestic affection, the mother forgetting herself, and ready to toil, suffer, die for the happiness and virtue of her children. Who is it that we honor in public life? It is the Martyr to his country, he who serves her, not when she has hon-

ors for his brow and wealth for his coffers, but who clings to her in her danger and falling glories, and thinks life a cheap sacrifice to her safety and freedom. Whom does the church retain in most grateful remembrance, and pronounce holy and blessed? The self-denying, self-immolating apostle, the fearless confessor, the devoted martyr, men who have held fast the truth even in death, and bequeathed it to future ages amidst blood. Above all, to what moment of the life of Jesus does the Christian turn, as the most affecting and sublime illustration of his divine character? It is that moment, when, in the spirit of self-sacrifice, denying every human passion, and casting away every earthly interest, he bore the agony and shame of the cross. Thus all great virtues bear the impress of self-denial; and were God's present constitution of our nature and life so reversed as to demand no renunciation of desire, the chief interest and glory of our present being would pass away. There would be nothing in history to thrill us with admiration. We should have no consciousness of the power and greatness of the soul. We should love feebly and coldly, for we should find nothing in one another to love earnestly. Let us not, then, complain of Providence because it has made self-denial necessary; or complain of religion because it summons us to this work. Religion and nature here hold one language. Our own souls bear witness to the teaching of Christ, that it is the "narrow way" of self-denial "which leadeth unto life."

My friends, at death, if reason is spared to us and memory retains its hold on the past, will it gratify us to see, that we have lived, not to deny, but to indulge ourselves, that we have bowed our souls to any passion,

that we gave the reins to lust, that we were palsied by sloth, that, through love of gain, we hardened ourselves against the claims of humanity, or, through love of man's favor, parted with truth and moral independence, or that in any thing reason and conscience were sacrificed to the impulse of desire, and God forgotten for present good? Shall we then find comfort in remembering our tables of luxury, our pillows of down, our wealth amassed and employed for private ends, or our honors won by base compliance with the world? Did any man at his death ever regret his conflicts with himself, his victories over appetite, his scorn of impure pleasures, or his sufferings for righteousness' sake? Did any man ever mourn, that he had impoverished himself by integrity, or worn out his frame in the service of mankind? Are these the recollections which harrow the soul, and darken and appall the last hour? To whom is the last hour most serene and full of hope? Is it not to him, who, amidst perils and allurements, has denied himself, and taken up the cross with the holy resolution of Jesus Christ?

SELF-DENIAL.

MATTHEW xvi. 24: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

IN the preceding discourse, I spoke of the just limits and moral dignity of self-denial. I resume the subject, because it throws much light on the nature of true virtue, and helps us to distinguish moral goodness from qualities which resemble it. Clear conceptions on this point are inestimable. To love and seek excellence, we must know what it is, and separate it from counterfeits. For want of just views of virtue and piety, men's admiration and efforts are often wasted, and sometimes carry them wide of the great object of human life. Perhaps truth on this subject cannot be brought out more clearly than by considering the nature of Self-denial. Such will be the aim of this discourse.

To deny ourselves, is to deny, to withstand, to renounce whatever, within or without, interferes with our conviction of right, or with the will of God. It is to suffer, to make sacrifices, for duty or our principles. The question now offers itself, What constitutes the singular merit of this suffering? Mere suffering, we

all know, is not virtue. Evil men often endure pain as well as the good, and are evil still. This and this alone constitutes the worth and importance of the sacrifice, suffering, which enters into self-denial, that it springs from and manifests Moral Strength, power over ourselves, force of purpose, or the mind's resolute determination of itself to duty. It is the proof and result of inward energy. Difficulty, hardship, suffering, sacrifices, are tests and measures of Moral Force, and the great means of its enlargement. To withstand these is the same thing as to put forth power. Self-denial, then, is the will acting with power in the choice and prosecution of duty. Here we have the distinguishing glory of self-denial, and here we have the essence and distinction of a good and virtuous man.

The truth to which these views lead us, and which I am now solicitous to enforce, is this, that the great characteristic of a virtuous or religious mind is strength of Moral purpose. This force is the measure of excellence. The very idea of Duty implies that we are bound to adopt and pursue it with a stronger and more settled determination than any other object, and virtue consists in fidelity to this primary dictate of conscience. We have virtue only as far as we exert inward energy, or as far as we put forth a strong and overcoming will in obeying the law of God and of our own minds. Let this truth be deeply felt. Let us not confide in good emotions, in kind feelings, in tears for the suffering, or in admiration of noble deeds. These are not goodness, in the moral and Christian sense of that word. It is force of upright and holy purpose, attested and approved by withstanding trial, temptation, allurement, and suffering; it is this, in which virtues consists. I

know nothing else which an enlightened conscience approves, nothing else which God will accept.

I am aware, that if I were called upon to state my ideas of a perfect character, I should give an answer that would seem at first to contradict the doctrine just expressed, or to be inconsistent with the stress which I have laid on strength of moral purpose. I should say, that perfection of mind, like that of the body, consists of two elements, of strength and beauty; that it consists of firmness and mildness, of force and tenderness, of vigor and grace. It would ill become a teacher of Christianity to overlook the importance of sympathy, gentleness, humility, and charity, in his definition of moral excellence. The amiable, attractive, mild attributes of the mind are recommended as of great price in the sight of God, by Him who was emphatically meek and lowly in heart. Still I must say, that all virtue lies in strength of character or of moral purpose; for these gentle, sweet, winning qualities rise into virtue only when pervaded and sustained by moral energy. On this they must rest, by this they must be controlled and exalted, or they have no moral worth. I acknowledge love, kindness, to be a great virtue; but what do I mean by love, when I thus speak? Do I mean a constitutional tenderness? an instinctive sympathy? the natural and almost necessary attachment to friends and benefactors? the kindness which is inseparable from our social state, and which is never wholly extinguished in the human breast? In all these emotions of our nature, I see the kind design of God; I see a beauty; I see the germ and capacity of an ever-growing charity. But they are not virtues, they are not proper objects of moral approbation, nor do they give any sure pledge of improvement. This natural amiableness I too

often see in company with sloth, with uselessness, with the contemptible vanity and dissipation of fashionable life. It is no ground of trust, no promise of fidelity, in any of the great exigencies of life. The love, the benevolence, which I honor as virtue, is not the gift of nature or condition, but the growth and manifestation of the soul's moral power. It is a spirit chosen as excellent, cherished as divine, protected with a jealous care, and especially fortified by the resistance and subjection of opposite propensities. It is the soul, determining itself to break every chain of selfishness, to enlarge and to invigorate the kind affections, to identify itself with other beings, to sympathize, not with a few, but with all the living and rational children of God, to honor others' worth, to increase and enjoy their happiness, to partake in the universal goodness of the Creator, and to put down within itself every motion of pride, anger, or sensual desire, inconsistent with this pure charity. In other words, it is strength of holy purpose, infused into the kind affections, which raises them into virtues, or gives them a moral worth, not found in constitutional amiableness.

I read in the Scriptures the praises of meekness. But when I see a man meek or patient of injury through tameness, or insensibility, or want of self-respect, passively gentle, meek through constitution or fear, I look on him with feelings very different from veneration. It is the meekness of principle; it is mildness replete with energy; it is the forbearance of a man who feels a wrong, but who curbs anger, who though injured resolves to be just, who voluntarily remembers that his foe is a man and a brother, who dreads to surrender himself to his passions, who in the moment of provocation sub-

jects himself to reason and religion, and who holds fast the great truth, that the noblest victory over a foe is to disarm and subdue him by equity and kindness, — it is this meekness which I venerate, and which seems to me one of the divinest virtues. It is moral power, the strength of virtuous purpose, pervading meekness, which gives it all its title to respect.

It is worthy of special remark, that without this moral energy, resisting passion and impulse, our tenderest attachments degenerate more or less into weaknesses and immoralities; sometimes prompting us to sympathize with those whom we love, in their errors, prejudices, and evil passions; sometimes inciting us to heap upon them injurious praises and indulgences: sometimes urging us to wrong or neglect others, that we may the more enjoy or serve our favorites; and sometimes poisoning our breasts with jealousy or envy, because our affection is not returned with equal warmth. The principle of love, whether exercised towards our relatives or our country, whether manifested in courtesy or compassion, can only become virtue, can only acquire purity, consistency, serenity, dignity, when imbued, swayed, cherished, enlarged by the power of a virtuous will, by a self-denying energy. It is Inward Force, power over ourselves, which is the beginning and the end of virtue.

What I have now said of the kind affections is equally true of the religious ones. These have virtue in them, only as far as they are imbued with self-denying strength. I know that multitudes place religion in feeling. Ardent sensibility is the measure of piety. He who is wrought up by preaching or sympathy into extraordinary fervor, is a saint; and the less he governs himself in his piety, the more he is looked upon as inspired.

But I know of no religion which has moral worth or is acceptable to God, but that which grows from and is nqurished by our own spiritual, self-denying energy. Emotion towards God, springing up without our own thought or care, grateful feelings at the reception of signal benefits, the swelling of the soul at the sight of nature, tenderness awakened by descriptions of the love and cross of Christ, these, though showing high capacities, though means and materials of piety, are not *of themselves* acceptable religion. The religious character which has true virtue, and which is built upon a rock, is that which has been deliberately and resolutely adopted and cherished, as our highest duty, and as the friend and strengthener of all other duties; and which we have watched over and confirmed by suppressing inconsistent desires and passions, by warring against selfishness and the love of the world.

There is one fact very decisive on this subject. It is not uncommon to see people with strong religious feeling, who are not made better by it; who at church or in other meetings are moved perhaps to tears, but who make no progress in self-government or charity, and who gain nothing of elevation of mind in their common feelings and transactions. They take pleasure in religious excitement, just as others delight to be interested by a fiction or a play. They invite these emotions because they suppose them to aid or insure salvation, and soon relapse into their ordinary sordidness or other besetting infirmities. Now to give the name of Religion to this mockery, is the surest way to dishonor it. True religion is not mere emotion, is not something communicated to us without our own moral effort. It involves much self-denial. Its great characteristic is, not feeling, but the subjection of

our wills, desires, habits, lives, to the will of God, from a conviction that what he wills is the perfection of virtue, and the true happiness of our nature. In genuine piety the mind chooses as its supreme good, the moral excellence enjoined by its Author, and resolutely renounces whatever would sully this divine image, and so disturb its communion with God. This religion, though its essence be not emotion, will gradually gather and issue in a sensibility, deeper, intenser, more glowing, than the blind enthusiast ever felt; and then only does it manifest itself in its perfect form, when, through a self-denying and self-purifying power, it rises to an overflowing love, gratitude, and joy towards the Universal Father.

In insisting on the great principle, that religion, or virtue, consists in strength of moral purpose, in the soul's resolute determination of itself to duty, I am satisfied that I express a truth, which has a witness and confirmation in the breast of every reflecting man. We all of us feel, that virtue is not something adopted from necessity, something to which feeling impels us, something which comes to us from constitution, or accident, or outward condition; but that it has its origin in our moral freedom, that it consists in moral energy; and accordingly we all measure virtue by the trials and difficulties which it overcomes, for these are the tests and measures of the force with which the soul adopts it. Every one of us, who has adhered to duty, when duty brought no recompense but the conviction of well-doing, who has faced the perils of a good but persecuted cause with unshrinking courage, who has been conscious of an inward triumph over temptation, conscious of having put down bad motives and exalted good ones in his own breast, must remember

the clear, strong, authentic voice, the accents of peculiar encouragement and joy, with which the inward judge has at such seasons pronounced its approving sentence. This experience is universal, and it is the voice of nature and of God, in confirmation of the great truth of this discourse.

I fear, that the importance of strength in the Christian character has been in some degree obscured by the habit of calling certain Christian graces of singular worth by the name of *passive* virtues. This name has been given to humility, patience, resignation; and I fear, that the phrase has led some to regard these noble qualities as allied to inaction, as wanting energy and determination. Now the truth is, that the mind never puts forth greater power over itself, than when, in great trials, it yields up calmly its desires, affections, interests to God. There are seasons, when to be *still* demands immeasurably higher strength than to act. Composure is often the highest result of power. Think you it demands no power to calm the stormy elements of passion, to moderate the vehemence of desire, to throw off the load of dejection, to suppress every repining thought, when the dearest hopes are withered, and to turn the wounded spirit from dangerous reveries and wasting grief, to the quiet discharge of ordinary duties? Is there no power put forth, when a man, stripped of his property, of the fruits of a life's labor, quells discontent and gloomy forebodings, and serenely and patiently returns to the tasks which Providence assigns? I doubt not, that the all-seeing eye of God sometimes discerns the sublimest human energy under a form and countenance, which by their composure and tranquillity indicate to the human spectator only passive virtues.

The doctrine of this discourse is in every view interesting. To me it goes further than all others to explain the present state. If moral strength, if inward power in the choice and practice of duty, constitute excellence and happiness, then I see why we are placed in a world of obstructions, perils, hardships, why duty is so often a "narrow way," why the warfare of the passions with conscience is so subtile and unceasing; why within and without us are so many foes to rectitude; for this is the very state to call forth and to build up moral force. In a world where duty and inclination should perfectly agree, we should indeed never err, but the living power of virtue could not be developed. Do not complain, then, of life's trials. Through these you may gain incomparably higher good, than indulgence and ease. This view reveals to us the impartial goodness of God in the variety of human conditions. We sometimes see individuals, whose peculiar trials are thought to make their existence to them an evil. But among such may be found the most favored children of God. If there be a man on earth to be envied, it is he, who, amidst the sharpest assaults from his own passions, from fortune, from society, never falters in his allegiance to God and the inward monitor. So peculiar is the excellence of this moral strength, that I believe the Creator regards one being who puts it forth, with greater complacency than he would look on a world of beings, innocent and harmless through the necessity of constitution. I know not that human wisdom has arrived at a juster or higher view of the present state, than that it is intended to call forth power by obstruction, the power of intellect by the difficulties of knowledge, the power of conscience and virtue by temptation, allure-

ment, pleasure, pain, and the alternations of prosperous and adverse life. When I see a man holding faster his uprightness in proportion as it is assailed, fortifying his religious trust in proportion as Providence is obscure; hoping in the ultimate triumphs of virtue, more surely in proportion to its present afflictions; cherishing philanthropy amidst the discouraging experience of men's unkindness and unthankfulness; extending to others a sympathy which his own sufferings need, but cannot obtain; growing milder and gentler amidst what tends to exasperate and harden; and through inward principle converting the very incitements to evil into the occasions of a victorious virtue, — I see an explanation, and a noble explanation, of the present state. I see a good produced, so transcendent in its nature as to justify all the evil and suffering under which it grows up. I should think the formation of a few such minds worth all the apparatus of the present world. I should say, that this earth, with its continents and oceans, its seasons and harvests, and its successive generations, was a work worthy of God, even were it to accomplish no other end than the training and manifestation of the illustrious characters which are scattered through history. And when I consider, how small a portion of human virtue is recorded by history, how superior in dignity, as well as in number, are the unnoticed, unhonored saints and heroes of domestic and humble life, I see a light thrown over the present state which more than reconciles me to all its evils.

The views given in this discourse of the importance of moral power, manifested in great trials, may be employed to shed a glorious and perhaps a new light on the character and cross of Christ. But this topic can

now be only suggested to your private meditation. There is, however, one practical application of our subject, which may be made in a few words, and which I cannot omit. I wish to ask the young who hear me, and especially of my own sex, to use the views now offered in judging and forming their characters. Young man, remember that the only test of goodness, virtue, is moral strength, self-denying energy. You have generous and honorable feelings, you scorn mean actions, your heart beats quick at the sight or hearing of courageous, disinterested deeds, and all these are interesting qualities; but, remember, they are the gifts of nature, the endowments of your susceptible age. They are not virtue. God and the inward monitor ask for more. The question is, Do you strive to confirm, into permanent principles, the generous sensibilities of the heart? Are you watchful to suppress the impetuous emotions, the resentments, the selfish passionateness, which are warring against your honorable feelings? Especially do you subject to your moral and religious convictions, the love of pleasure, the appetites, the passions, which form the great trials of youthful virtue? Here is the field of conflict to which youth is summoned. Trust not to occasional impulses of benevolence, to constitutional courage, frankness, kindness, if you surrender yourselves basely to the temptations of your age. No man who has made any observation of life, but will tell you how often he has seen the promise of youth blasted; intellect, genius, honorable feeling, kind affection, overpowered and almost extinguished, through the want of moral strength, through a tame yielding to pleasure and the passions. Place no trust in your good propensities, unless these are fortified, and upheld, and

improved by moral energy and self-control. — To all of us, in truth, the same lesson comes. If any man will be Christ's disciple, sincerely good, and worthy to be named among the friends of virtue, if he will have inward peace and the consciousness of progress towards Heaven, he must deny himself, he must take the cross, and follow Christ in the renunciation of every gain and pleasure inconsistent with the will of God.

THE

IMITABLENESS OF CHRIST'S CHARACTER

1 Peter ii. 21: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."

The example of Jesus is our topic. To incite you to follow it, is the aim of this discourse. Christ came to give us a religion, — but this is not all. By a wise and beautiful ordination of Providence, he was sent to show forth his religion in himself. He did not come to sit in a hall of legislation, and from some commanding eminence to pronounce laws and promises. He is not a mere channel through which certain communications are made from God; not a mere messenger appointed to utter the words which he had heard, and then to disappear, and to sustain no further connexion with his message. He came, not only to teach with his lips, but to be a living manifestation of his religion, — to be, in an important sense, the religion itself.

This is a peculiarity worthy of attention. Christianity is not a mere code of laws, not an abstract system such as theologians frame. It is a living, embodied religion. It comes to us in a human form; it offers itself to our eyes as well as ears; it breathes, it moves in our sight. It is more than precept; it is example and action

The importance of example, who does not understand? How much do most of us suffer from the presence, conversation, spirit, of men of low minds by whom we are surrounded! The temptation is strong, to take as our standard, the average character of the society in which we live, and to satisfy ourselves with decencies and attainments which secure to us among the multitude the name of respectable men. On the other hand, there is a power (have you not felt it?) in the presence, conversation, and example of a man of strong principle and magnanimity, to lift us, at least for the moment, from our vulgar and tame habits of thought, and to kindle some generous aspirations after the excellence which we were made to attain. I hardly need say to you, that it is impossible to place ourselves under any influence of this nature so quickening as the example of Jesus. This introduces us to the highest order of virtues. This is fitted to awaken the whole mind. Nothing has equal power to neutralize the coarse, selfish, and sensual influences, amidst which we are plunged, to refine our conception of duty, and to reveal to us the perfection on which our hopes and most strenuous desires should habitually fasten.

There is one cause, which has done much to defeat this good influence of Christ's character and example, and which ought to be exposed. It is this. Multitudes, I am afraid great multitudes, think of Jesus as a being to be admired, rather than approached. They have some vague conceptions of a glory in his nature and character which makes it presumption to think of proposing him as their standard. He is thrown so far from them, that he does them little good. Many feel that a close resemblance of Jesus Christ is not to be expected.

that this, like many other topics, may serve for declamation in the pulpit, but is utterly incapable of being reduced to practice. I think I am touching here an error, which exerts a blighting influence on not a few minds. Until men think of the religion and character of Christ as truly applicable to them, as intended to be brought into continual operation, as what they must incorporate with their whole spiritual nature, they will derive little good from Christ. Men think indeed to honor Jesus, when they place him so high as to discourage all effort to approach him. They really degrade him. They do not understand his character; they throw a glare over it, which hides its true features. This vague admiration is the poorest tribute which they can pay him.

The manner in which Jesus Christ is conceived and spoken of by many, reminds me of what is often seen in Catholic countries, where a superstitious priesthood and people imagine that they honor the Virgin Mary by loading her image with sparkling jewels and the gaudiest attire. A Protestant of an uncorrupted taste is at first shocked, as if there was something like profanation in thus decking out, as for a theatre, the meek, modest, gentle, pure, and tender mother of Jesus. It seems to me, that something of the same superstition is seen in the indefinite epithets of admiration heaped upon Jesus; and the effect is, that the mild and simple beauty of his character is not seen. Its sublimity, which had nothing gaudy or dazzling, which was plain and unaffected, is not felt; and its suitableness as an example to mankind, is discredited or denied.

I wish, in this discourse, to prevent the discouraging influence of the greatness of Jesus Christ; to show, that,

however exalted, he is not placed beyond the reach of our sympathy and imitation.

I begin with the general observation, that real greatness of character, greatness of the highest order, far from being repulsive and discouraging, is singularly accessible and imitable, and, instead of severing a being from others, fits him to be their friend and model. A man who stands apart from his race, who has few points of contact with other men, who has a style and manner which strike awe, and keep others far from him, whatever rank he may hold in his own and others' eyes, wants, after all, true grandeur of mind; and the spirit of this remark, I think, may be extended beyond men to higher orders of beings, to angels and to Jesus Christ. A great soul is known by its enlarged, strong, and tender sympathies. True elevation of mind does not take a being out of the circle of those who are below him, but binds him faster to them, and gives them advantages for a closer attachment and conformity to him.

Greatness of character is a communicable attribute; I should say, singularly communicable. It has nothing exclusive in its nature. It cannot be the monopoly of an individual, for it is the enlarged and generous action of faculties and affections which enter into and constitute all minds, I mean reason, conscience, and love, so that its elements exist in all. It is not a peculiar or exclusive knowledge, which can be shut up in one or a few understandings; but the comprehension of great and universal truths, which are the proper objects of every rational being. It is not a devotion to peculiar, exclusive objects, but the adoption of public interests, the consecration of the mind to the cause of virtue and hap-

piness in the creation, that is, to the very cause which all intelligent beings are bound to espouse. Greatness is not a secret, solitary principle, working by itself and refusing participation, but frank and open-hearted, so large in its views, so liberal in its feelings, so expansive in its purposes, so beneficent in its labors, as naturally and necessarily to attract sympathy and coöperation. It is selfishness that repels men; and true greatness has not a stronger characteristic than its freedom from every selfish taint. So far from being imprisoned in private interests, it covets nothing which it may not impart. So far from being absorbed in its own distinctions, it discerns nothing so quickly and joyfully as the capacities and pledges of greatness in others, and counts no labor so noble as to call forth noble sentiments, and the consciousness of a divine power, in less improved minds.

I know that those who call themselves great on earth, are apt to estrange themselves from their inferiors; and the multitude, cast down by their high bearing, never think of proposing them as examples. But this springs wholly from the low conceptions of those whom we call the great, and shows a mixture of vulgarity of mind with their superior endowments. Genuine greatness is marked by simplicity, unostentatiousness, self-forgetfulness, a hearty interest in others, a feeling of brotherhood with the human family, and a respect for every intellectual and immortal being as capable of progress towards its own elevation. A superior mind, enlightened and kindled by just views of God and of the creation, regards its gifts and powers as so many bonds of union with other beings, as given it, not to nourish self-elation, but to be employed for others, and still more to be communicated to others. Such greatness has no reserve, and

especially no affected dignity of deportment. It is too conscious of its own power, to need, and too benevolent to desire, to entrench itself behind forms and ceremonies ; and when circumstances permit such a character to manifest itself to inferior beings, it is beyond all others the most winning, and most fitted to impart itself, or to call forth a kindred elevation of feeling. I know not in history an individual so easily comprehended as Jesus Christ, for nothing is so intelligible as sincere, disinterested love. I know not any being who is so fitted to take hold on all orders of minds ; and accordingly he drew after him the unenlightened, the publican, and the sinner. It is a sad mistake, then, that Jesus Christ is too great to allow us to think of intimacy with him, and to think of making him our standard.

Let me confirm this truth by another order of reflections. You tell me, my hearers, that Jesus Christ is so high that he cannot be your model ; I grant the exaltation of his character. I believe him to be a more than human being. In truth, all Christians so believe him. Those who suppose him not to have existed before his birth, do not regard him as a mere man, though so reproached. They always separate him by broad distinctions from other men. They consider him as enjoying a communion with God, and as having received gifts, endowments, aid, lights from him, granted to no other, and as having exhibited a spotless purity, which is the highest distinction of Heaven. All admit, and joyfully admit, that Jesus Christ, by his greatness and goodness, throws all other human attainments into obscurity. But on this account he is not less a standard, nor is he to discourage us, but on the contrary to breathe into us a

more exhilarating hope; for though so far above us, he is still one of us, and is only an illustration of the capacities which we all possess. This is a great truth. Let me strive to unfold it. Perhaps I cannot better express my views, than by saying, that I regard all minds as of one family. When we speak of higher orders of beings, of angels and archangels, we are apt to conceive of distinct kinds or races of beings, separated from us and from each other by impassable barriers. But it is not so. All minds are of one family. There is no such partition in the spiritual world as you see in the material. In material nature, you see wholly distinct classes of beings. A mineral is not a vegetable, and makes no approach to it; these two great kingdoms of nature are divided by immeasurable spaces. So, when we look at different races of animals, though all partake of that mysterious property, life, yet, what an immense and impassable distance is there between the insect and the lion. They have no bond of union, no possibility of communication. During the lapse of ages, the animalcules which sport in the sunbeams a summer's day and then perish, have made no approximation to the king of the forests. But in the intellectual world there are no such barriers. All minds are essentially of one origin, one nature, kindled from one divine flame, and are all tending to one centre, one happiness. This great truth, to us the greatest of truths, which lies at the foundation of all religion and of all hope, seems to me not only sustained by proofs which satisfy the reason, but to be one of the deep instincts of our nature. It mingles, unperceived, with all our worship of God, which uniformly takes for granted that he is a Mind having thought, affection, and volition like ourselves. It runs

through false religions; and whilst, by its perversion, it has made them false, it has also given to them whatever purifying power they possess. But passing over this instinct, which is felt more and more to be unerring as the intellect is improved, this great truth of the unity or likeness of all minds, seems to me demonstrable from this consideration, that Truth, the object and nutriment of mind, is one and immutable, so that the whole family of intelligent beings must have the same views, the same motives, and the same general ends. For example, a truth of mathematics, is not a truth only in this world, a truth to our minds, but a truth everywhere, a truth in heaven, a truth to God, who has indeed framed his creation according to the laws of this universal science. So, happiness and misery, which lie at the foundation of morals, must be to all intelligent beings what they are to us, the objects, one of desire and hope, and the other of aversion; and who can doubt that virtue and vice are the same everywhere as on earth, that in every community of beings, the mind which devotes itself to the general weal, must be more reverenced than a mind which would subordinate the general interest to its own. Thus all souls are one in nature, approach one another, and have grounds and bonds of communion with one another. I am not only one of the human race; I am one of the great intellectual family of God. There is no spirit so exalted, with which I have not common thoughts and feelings. That conception which I have gained, of One Universal Father, whose love is the fountain and centre of all things, is the dawn of the highest and most magnificent views in the universe; and if I look up to this being with filial love, I have the spring and beginning of the noblest sentiments and joys

which are known in the universe. No greatness, therefore, of a being, separates me from him or makes him unapproachable by me. The mind of Jesus Christ, my hearer, and your mind are of one family; nor was there any thing in his, of which you have not the principle, the capacity, the promise in yourself. This is the very impression which he intends to give. He never held himself up as an inimitable and unapproachable being; but directly the reverse. He always spoke of himself as having come to communicate himself to others. He always invited men to believe on and adhere to him, that they might receive that very spirit, that pure, celestial spirit, by which he was himself actuated. "Follow me," is his lesson. The relation which he came to establish between himself and mankind, was not that of master and slave, but that of friends. He compares himself, in a spirit of divine benevolence, to a vine, which, you know, sends its own sap, that by which it is itself nourished, into all its branches. We read, too, these remarkable words in his prayer for his disciples, "I have given to them the glory thou gavest me;" and I am persuaded that there is not a glory, a virtue, a power, a joy, possessed by Jesus Christ, to which his disciples will not successively rise. In the spirit of these remarks, the Apostles say, "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ."

I have said, that all minds being of one family, the greatness of the mind of Christ is no discouragement to our adoption of him as our model. I now observe, that there is one attribute of mind to which I have alluded, that should particularly animate us to propose to ourselves a sublime standard, as sublime as Jesus Christ. I refer to the principle of growth in human nature. We

were made to grow. Our faculties are germs, and given for an expansion, to which nothing authorizes us to set bounds. The soul bears the impress of illimitableness, in the thirst, the unquenchable thirst, which it brings with it into being, for a power, knowledge, happiness, which it never gains, and which always carry it forward into futurity. The body soon reaches its limit. But intellect, affection, moral energy, in proportion to their growth, tend to further enlargement, and every acquisition is an impulse to something higher. When I consider this principle or capacity of the human soul, I cannot restrain the hope which it awakens. The partition-walls which imagination has reared between men and higher orders of beings vanish. I no longer see aught to prevent our becoming whatever was good and great in Jesus on earth. In truth, I feel my utter inability to conceive what a mind is to attain which is to advance for ever. Add but that element, eternity, to man's progress, and the results of his existence surpass, not only human, but angelic thought. Give me this, and the future glory of the human mind becomes to me as incomprehensible as God himself. To encourage these thoughts and hopes, our Creator has set before us delightful exemplifications, even now, of this principle of growth both in outward nature and in the human mind. We meet them in nature. Suppose you were to carry a man, wholly unacquainted with vegetation, to the most majestic tree in our forests, and, whilst he was admiring its extent and proportions, suppose you should take from the earth at its root a little downy substance, which a breath might blow away, and say to him, That tree was once such a seed as this; it was wrapped up here; it once lived only within these delicate fibres, this

narrow compass. With what incredulous wonder would he regard you! And if by an effort of imagination, somewhat Oriental, we should suppose this little seed to be suddenly endued with thought, and to be told that it was one day to become this mighty tree, and to cast out branches which would spread an equal shade, and wave with equal grace, and withstand the winter winds; with what amazement may we suppose it to anticipate its future lot! Such growth we witness in nature. A nobler hope we Christians are to cherish; and still more striking examples of the growth of mind are set before us in human history. We wonder indeed when we are told, that one day we shall be as the angels of God. I apprehend that as great a wonder has been realized already on the earth. I apprehend that the distance between the mind of Newton and of a Hottentot may have been as great as between Newton and an angel. There is another view still more striking. This Newton, who lifted his calm, sublime eye to the heavens, and read among the planets and the stars, the great law of the material universe, was, forty or fifty years before, an infant, without one clear perception, and unable to distinguish his nurse's arm from the pillow on which he slept. Howard, too, who, under the strength of an all-sacrificing benevolence, explored the depths of human suffering, was, forty or fifty years before, an infant wholly absorbed in himself, grasping at all he saw, and almost breaking his little heart with fits of passion, when the idlest toy was withheld. Has not man already traversed as wide a space as separates him from angels? And why must he stop? There is no extravagance in the boldest anticipation. We may truly become one with Christ, a partaker of that celestial mind. He is

truly our brother, one of our family. Let us make him our constant model.

I know not that the doctrine now laid down, is liable but to one abuse. It may unduly excite susceptible minds, and impel to a vehemence of hope and exertion unfavorable in the end to the very progress which is proposed. To such I would say, Hasten to conform yourselves to Christ, but hasten according to the laws of your nature. As the body cannot by the concentration of its whole strength into one bound, scale the height of a mountain, neither can the mind free every obstacle and achieve perfection by an agony of the will. Great effort is indeed necessary; but such as can be sustained, such as fits us for greater, such as will accumulate, not exhaust, our spiritual force. The soul may be overstrained as truly as the body, and it often is so in seasons of extraordinary religious excitement; and the consequence is, an injury to the constitution of the intellect and the heart, which a life may not be able to repair. I rest the hopes for human nature, which I have now expressed, on its principle of growth; and growth, as you well know, is a gradual process, not a convulsive start, accomplishing the work of years in a moment. All great attainments are gradual. As easily might a science be mastered by one struggle of thought, as sin be conquered by a spasm of remorse. Continuous, patient effort, guided by wise deliberation, is the true means of spiritual progress. In religion, as in common life, mere force of vehemence will prove a fallacious substitute for the sobriety of wisdom.

The doctrine which I have chiefly labored to maintain in this discourse, that minds are all of one family, are all

brethren, and may be more and more nearly united to God, seems to me to have been felt peculiarly by Jesus Christ ; and if I were to point out the distinction of his greatness, I should say it lay in this. He felt his superiority, but he never felt as if it separated him from mankind. He did not come among us as some great men would visit a colliery, or any other resort of the ignorant and corrupt, with an air of greatness, feeling himself above us, and giving benefits as if it were an infinite condescension. He came and mingled with us as a friend and a brother. He saw in every human being a mind which might wear his own brightest glory. He was severe only towards one class of men, and they were those who looked down on the multitude with contempt. Jesus respected human nature ; he felt it to be his own. This was the greatness of Jesus Christ. He felt, as no other felt, a union of mind with the human race, felt that all had a spark of that same intellectual and immortal flame which dwelt in himself.

I insist on this view of his character, not only to encourage us to aspire after a likeness to Jesus ; I consider it as peculiarly fitted to call forth love towards him. If I regard Jesus as an august stranger, belonging to an entirely different class of existence from myself, having no common thoughts or feelings with me, and looking down upon me with only such a sympathy as I have with an inferior animal, I should regard him with a vague awe ; but the immeasurable space between us would place him beyond friendship and affection. But when I feel, that all minds form one family, that I have the same nature with Jesus, and that he came to communicate to me, by his teaching, example, and intercession, his own mind, to

bring me into communion with what was sublimest, purest, happiest in himself, then I can love him as I love no other being, excepting only Him who is the Father alike of Christ and of the Christian. With these views, I feel that, though ascended to Heaven, he is not gone beyond the reach of our hearts; that he has now the same interest in mankind as when he entered their dwellings, sat at their tables, washed their feet; and that there is no being so approachable, none with whom such unreserved intercourse is to be enjoyed in the future world.

Believing, as I do, that I have now used no inflated language, but have spoken the words of truth and soberness, I exhort you with calmness, but earnestness, to choose and adopt Jesus Christ as your example, with the whole energy of your wills. I exhort you to resolve on following him, not, as perhaps you have done, with a faint and yielding purpose, but with the full conviction, that your whole happiness is concentrated in the force and constancy of your adherence to this celestial guide. My friends, there is no other happiness. Let not the false views of Christianity which prevail in the world, seduce you into the belief, that Christ can bless you in any other way than by assimilating you to his own virtue, than by breathing into you his own mind. Do not imagine that any faith or love towards Jesus can avail you, but that which quickens you to conform yourselves to his spotless purity and unconquerable rectitude. Settle it as an immovable truth, that neither in this world nor in the next can you be happy, but in proportion to the sanctity and elevation of your characters. Let no man imagine, that through the patronage or protection of Je-

sus Christ, or any other being, he can find peace or any sincere good, but in the growth of an enlightened, firm, disinterested, holy mind. Expect no good from Jesus, any farther than you clothe yourselves with excellence. He can impart to you nothing so precious as himself, as his own mind ; and believe me, my hearers, this mind may dwell in you. His sublimest virtues may be yours. Admit, welcome this great truth. Look up to the illustrious Son of God, with the conviction that you may become one with him in thought, in feeling, in power, in holiness. His character will become a blessing, just as far as it shall awaken in you this consciousness, this hope. The most lamentable skepticism on earth, and incomparably the most common, is a skepticism as to the greatness, powers, and high destinies of human nature. In this greatness I desire to cherish an unwavering faith. Tell me not of the universal corruption of the race. Humanity has already, in not a few instances, borne conspicuously the likeness of Christ and God. The sun grows dim, the grandeur of outward nature shrinks, when compared with the spiritual energy of men, who, in the cause of truth, of God, of charity, have spurned all bribes of ease, pleasure, renown, and have withstood shame, want, persecution, torture, and the most dreaded forms of death. In such men I learn that the soul was made in God's image, and made to conform itself to the loveliness and greatness of his Son.

My Friends, we may all approach Jesus Christ. For all of us he died, to leave us an example that we should follow his steps. By earnest purpose, by self-conflict, by watching and prayer, by faith in the Christian promises, by those heavenly aids and illuminations, which he

that seeketh shall find, we may all unite ourselves, in living bonds, to Christ, may love as he loved, may act from his principles, may suffer with his constancy, may enter into his purposes, may sympathize with his self-devotion to the cause of God and mankind, and, by likeness of spirit, may prepare ourselves to meet him as our everlasting friend.

THE EVIL OF SIN.

PROVERBS xiv. 9: "Fools make a mock at sin."

MY aim in this discourse is simple, and may be expressed in a few words. I wish to guard you against thinking lightly of sin. No folly is so monstrous, and yet our exposure to it is great. Breathing an atmosphere tainted with moral evil, seeing and hearing sin in our daily walks, we are in no small danger of overlooking its malignity. This malignity I would set before you with all plainness, believing that the effort which is needed to resist this enemy of our peace, is to be called forth by fixing on it our frequent and serious attention.

I feel as if a difficulty lay at the very threshold of this discussion, which it is worth our while to remove. The word Sin, I apprehend, is to many obscure, or not sufficiently plain. It is a word seldom used in common life. It belongs to theology and the pulpit. By not a few people, sin is supposed to be a property of our nature, born with us; and we sometimes hear of the child as being sinful before it can have performed any action. From these and other causes, the word gives to many confused notions. Sin, in its true sense, is the viola-

tion of duty, and cannot, consequently, exist, before conscience has begun to act, and before power to obey it is unfolded. To sin is to resist our sense of right, to oppose known obligation, to cherish feelings, or commit deeds, which we know to be wrong. It is, to withhold from God the reverence, gratitude, and obedience, which our own consciences pronounce to be due to that great and good Being. It is, to transgress those laws of equity, justice, candor, humanity, disinterestedness, which we all feel to belong and to answer to our various social relations. It is, to yield ourselves to those appetites which we know to be the inferior principles of our nature, to give the body a mastery over the mind, to sacrifice the intellect and heart to the senses, to surrender ourselves to ease and indulgence, or to prefer outward accumulation and power to strength and peace of conscience, to progress towards perfection. Such is sin. It is voluntary wrongdoing. Any gratification injurious to ourselves, is sin. Any act injurious to our neighbours, is sin. Indifference to our Creator, is sin. The transgression of any command which this excellent Being and rightful Sovereign has given us, whether by conscience or revelation, is sin. So broad is this term. It is as extensive as duty. It is not some mysterious thing wrought into our souls at birth. It is not a theological subtilty. It is choosing and acting in opposition to our sense of right, to known obligation.

Now, according to the Scriptures, there is nothing so evil, so deformed, so ruinous as sin. All pain, poverty, contempt, affliction, ill success, are light, and not to be named with it. To do wrong is more pernicious than to incur all the calamities which nature or

human malice can heap upon us. According to the Scriptures, I am not to fear those who would kill this body, and have nothing more that they can do. Such enemies are impotent, compared with that sin which draws down the displeasure of God, and draws after it misery and death to the soul. According to the Scriptures, I am to pluck out even a right eye, or cut off even a right arm, which would ensnare or seduce me into crime. The loss of the most important limbs and organs, is nothing compared to the loss of innocence. Such you know is the whole strain of Scripture. Sin, violated duty, the evil of the heart, this is the only evil of which Scripture takes account. It was from this that Christ came to redeem us. It is to purify us from this stain, to set us free from this yoke, that a new and supernatural agency was added to God's other means of promoting human happiness.

It is the design of these representations of Scripture, to lead us to connect with sin or wrong-doing the ideas of evil, wretchedness, and debasement, more strongly than with any thing else; and this deep, deliberate conviction of the wrong and evil done to ourselves by sin, is not simply a command of Christianity. It is not an arbitrary, positive precept, which rests solely on the word of the lawgiver, and of which no account can be given but that he wills it. It is alike the dictate of natural and revealed religion, an injunction of conscience and reason, founded in our very souls, and confirmed by constant experience. To regard sin, wrong-doing, as the greatest of evils, is God's command, proclaimed from within and without, from Heaven and earth; and he who does not hear it, has not learned the truth on which his whole happiness rests. This I propose to illustrate.

1. If we look within, we find in our very nature a testimony to the doctrine, that sin is the chief of evils, a testimony which, however slighted or smothered, will be recognised, I think, by every one who hears me. To understand this truth better, it may be useful to inquire into and compare the different kinds of evil. Evil has various forms, but these may all be reduced to two great divisions, called by philosophers *natural* and *moral*. By the first, is meant the pain or suffering which springs from outward condition and events, or from causes independent of the will. The latter, that is, moral evil, belongs to character and conduct, and is commonly expressed by the words sin, vice, transgression of the rule of right. Now I say, that there is no man, unless he be singularly hardened and an exception to his race, who, if these two classes or divisions of evil should be clearly and fully presented him in moments of calm and deliberate thinking, would not feel, through the very constitution of his mind, that sin or vice is worse and more to be dreaded than pain. I am willing to take from among you, the individual who has studied least the great questions of morality and religion, whose mind has grown up with least discipline. If I place before such a hearer two examples in strong contrast, one of a man gaining great property by an atrocious crime, and another exposing himself to great suffering through a resolute purpose of duty, will he not tell me at once, from a deep moral sentiment, which leaves not a doubt on his mind, that the last has chosen the better part, that he is more to be envied than the first? On these great questions, What is the chief good? and What the chief evil? we are instructed by our own nature. An inward voice has

told men, even in heathen countries, that excellence of character is the supreme good, and that baseness of soul and of action involves something worse than suffering. We have all of us, at some periods of life, had the same conviction; and these have been the periods when the mind has been healthiest, clearest, least perturbed by passion. Is there any one here who does not feel, that what the divine faculty of conscience enjoins as right, has stronger claims upon him than what is recommended as merely agreeable or advantageous; that duty is something more sacred than interest or pleasure; that virtue is a good of a higher order than gratification; that crime is something worse than outward loss? What means the admiration with which we follow the conscientious and disinterested man, and which grows strong in proportion to his sacrifices to duty? Is it not the testimony of our whole souls to the truth and greatness of the good he has chosen? What means the feeling of abhorrence, which we cannot repress if we would, towards him who, by abusing confidence, trampling on weakness, or hardening himself against the appeals of mercy, has grown rich or great? Do we think that such a man has made a good bargain in bartering principle for wealth? Is prosperous fortune a balance for vice? In our deliberate moments, is there not a voice which pronounces his craft folly, and his success misery?

And, to come nearer home, what conviction is it, which springs up most spontaneously in our more reflecting moments, when we look back without passion on our own lives? Can vice *stand* that calm look? Is there a single wrong act, which we would not then rejoice to expunge from the unalterable records of our deeds? Do we ever congratulate ourselves on having despised the

inward monitor, or revolted against God? To what portions of our history do we return most joyfully? Are they those in which we gained the world and lost the soul, in which temptation mastered our principles, which levity and sloth made a blank, or which a selfish and unprincipled activity made worse than a blank, in our existence? or are they those in which we suffered, but were true to conscience, in which we denied ourselves for duty, and sacrificed success through unwavering rectitude? In these moments of calm recollection, do not the very transgressions at which perhaps we once mocked, and which promised unmixed joy, recur to awaken shame and remorse? And do not shame and remorse involve a consciousness that we have sunk beneath our proper good? that our highest nature, what constitutes our true self, has been sacrificed to low interests and pursuits? I make these appeals confidently. I think my questions can receive but one answer. Now, these convictions and emotions, with which we witness moral evil in others, or recollect it in ourselves, these feelings towards guilt, which mere pain and suffering never excite, and which manifest themselves with more or less distinctness in all nations and all stages of society, these inward attestations that sin, wrong-doing, is a peculiar evil, for which no outward good can give adequate compensation, surely these deserve to be regarded as the voice of nature, the voice of God. They are accompanied with a peculiar consciousness of truth. They are felt to be our ornament and defence. Thus our nature teaches the doctrine of Christianity, that sin, or moral evil, ought of all evils to inspire most abhorrence and fear.

Our first argument has been drawn from Sentiment,

from deep and almost instinctive feeling, from the handwriting of the Creator on the soul. Our next, may be drawn from experience. We have said, that even when sin or wrong-doing is prosperous, and duty brings suffering, we feel that the suffering is a less evil than sin. I now add, in the second place, that sin, though it sometimes prospers, and never meets its full retribution on earth, yet, on the whole, produces more present suffering than all things else ; so that experience warns us against sin or wrong-doing as the chief evil we can incur. Whence come the sorest diseases and acutest bodily pains ? Come they not from the lusts warring in our members, from criminal excess ? What chiefly generates poverty and its worst sufferings ? Is it not to evils of character, to the want of self-denying virtue, that we must ascribe chiefly the evils of our outward condition ? The pages of history, how is it that they are so dark and sad ? Is it not, that they are stained with crime ? If we penetrate into private life, what spreads most misery through our homes ? Is it sickness, or selfishness ? Is it want of outward comforts, or want of inward discipline, of the spirit of love ? What more do we need to bring back Eden's happiness, than Eden's sinlessness ? How light a burden would be life's necessary ills, were they not aided by the crushing weight of our own and others' faults and crimes ? How fast would human woe vanish, were human selfishness, sensuality, injustice, pride, impiety, to yield to the pure and benign influences of Christian truth ? How many of us know, that the sharpest pains we have ever suffered, have been the wounds of pride, the paroxysms of passion, the stings of remorse ; and where this is not the case, who of us, if he were to know his own soul, would not see,

that the daily restlessness of life, the wearing uneasiness of the mind, which, as a whole, brings more suffering than acute pains, is altogether the result of undisciplined passions, of neglect or disobedience of God? Our discontents and anxieties have their origin in moral evil. The lines of suffering on almost every human countenance have been deepened, if not traced there, by unfaithfulness to conscience, by departures from duty. To do wrong is the surest way to bring suffering; no wrong deed ever failed to bring it. Those sins which are followed by no palpable pain, are yet terribly avenged even in this life. They abridge our capacity of happiness, impair our relish for innocent pleasure, and increase our sensibility to suffering. They spoil us of the armour of a pure conscience, and of trust in God, without which we are naked amidst hosts of foes, and are vulnerable by all the changes of life. Thus, to do wrong is to inflict the surest injury on our own peace. No enemy can do us equal harm with what we do ourselves, whenever or however we violate any moral or religious obligation.

I have time but for one more view of moral evil or sin, showing that it is truly the greatest evil. It is this. The miseries of disobedience to conscience and God are not exhausted in this life. Sin deserves, calls for, and will bring down Future, greater misery. This Christianity teaches, and this nature teaches. Retribution is not a new doctrine brought by Christ into the world. Though darkened and corrupted, it was spread everywhere before he came. It carried alarm to rude nations, which nothing on earth could terrify. It mixed with all the false religions of antiquity, and it finds a re-

sponse now in every mind not perverted by sophistry. That we shall carry with us into the future world our present minds, and that a character, formed in opposition to our highest faculties and to the will of God, will produce suffering in our future being, these are truths, in which revelation, reason, and conscience remarkably conspire.

I know, indeed, that this doctrine is sometimes questioned. It is maintained by some among us, that punishment is confined to the present state; that in changing worlds we shall change our characters; that moral evil is to be buried with the body in the grave. As this opinion spreads industriously, and as it tends to diminish the dread of sin, it deserves some notice. To my mind, a more irrational doctrine was never broached. In the first place, it contradicts all our experience of the nature and laws of the mind. There is nothing more striking in the mind, than the connexion of its successive states. Our present knowledge, thoughts, feelings, characters, are the results of former impressions, passions, and pursuits. We are this moment what the past has made us; and to suppose, that at death the influences of our whole past course are to cease on our minds, and that a character is to spring up altogether at war with what has preceded it, is to suppose the most important law or principle of the mind to be violated, is to destroy all analogy between the present and future, and to substitute for experience the wildest dreams of fancy. In truth, such a sudden revolution in the character, as is here supposed, seems to destroy a man's identity. The individual thus transformed, can hardly seem to himself or to others the same being. It is equivalent to the creation of a new soul.

Let me next ask, what fact can be adduced in proof or illustration of the power ascribed to death, of changing and purifying the mind? What is death? It is the dissolution of certain limbs and organs by which the soul now acts. But these, however closely connected with the mind, are entirely distinct from its powers, from thought and will, from conscience and affection. Why should the last grow pure from the dissolution of the first? Why shall the mind put on a new character, by laying aside the gross instruments through which it now operates? At death, the hands, the feet, the eye, and the ear perish. But they often perish during life; and does character change with them? It is true that our animal appetites are weakened and sometimes destroyed by the decay of the bodily organs on which they depend. But our deeper principles of action, and the moral complexion of the mind, are not therefore reversed. It often happens, that the sensualist, broken down by disease, which excess has induced, comes to loathe the luxuries to which he was once enslaved; but do his selfishness, his low habits of thought, his insensibility to God, decline and perish with his animal desires? Lop off the criminal's hands; does the disposition to do mischief vanish with them? When the feet mortify, do we see a corresponding mortification of the will to go astray? The loss of sight or hearing is a partial death; but is a single vice plucked from the mind, or one of its strong passions palsied, by this destruction of its chief corporeal instruments?

Again; the idea that by dying, or changing worlds, a man may be made better or virtuous, shows an ignorance of the nature of moral goodness or virtue. This belongs to free beings; it supposes moral liberty. A man

cannot be made virtuous, as an instrument may be put in tune, by a foreign hand, by an outward force. Virtue is that to which the man himself contributes. It is the fruit of exertion. It supposes conquest of temptation. It cannot be given from abroad to one who has wasted life, or steeped himself in crime. To suppose moral goodness breathed from abroad into the guilty mind, just as health may be imparted to a sick body, is to overlook the distinction between corporeal and intellectual natures, and to degrade a free being into a machine.

I will only add, that to suppose no connexion to exist between the present and the future character, is to take away the use of the present state. Why are we placed in a state of discipline, exposed to temptation, encompassed with suffering, if, without discipline, and by a sovereign act of omnipotence, we are all of us, be our present characters what they may, soon and suddenly to be made perfect in virtue, and perfect in happiness?

Let us not listen for a moment to a doctrine so irrational, as that our present characters do not follow us into a future world. If we are to live again, let us settle it as a sure fact, that we shall carry with us our present minds, such as we now make them; that we shall reap good or ill according to their improvement or corruption; and, of consequence, that every act, which affects character, will reach in its influence beyond the grave, and have a bearing on our future weal or woe. We are now framing our future lot. He who does a bad deed says, more strongly than words can utter, "I cast away a portion of future good, I resolve on future pain."

I proceed now to an important and solemn remark, in illustration of the evil of sin. It is plainly implied in Scripture, that we shall suffer much more from sin, evil tempers, irreligion, in the future world, than we suffer here. This is one main distinction between the two states. In the present world, sin does indeed bring with it many pains, but not full or exact retribution, and sometimes it seems crowned with prosperity; and the cause of this is obvious. The present world is a state for the formation of character. It is meant to be a state of trial, where we are to act freely, to have opportunities of wrong as well as right action, and to become virtuous amidst temptation. Now such a purpose requires, that sin, or wrong-doing, should not regularly and infallibly produce its full and immediate punishment. For, suppose, my hearers, that, at the very instant of a bad purpose or a bad deed, a sore and awful penalty were unfailingly to light upon you; would this be consistent with trial? would you have moral freedom? would you not live under compulsion? Who would do wrong, if judgment were to come like lightning after every evil deed? In such a world, fear would suspend our liberty and supersede conscience. Accordingly sin, though, as we have seen, it produces great misery, is still left to compass many of its objects, often to prosper, often to be gain. Vice, bad as it is, has often many pleasures in its train. The worst men partake, equally with the good, the light of the sun, the rain, the harvest, the accommodations and improvements of civilized life, and sometimes accumulate more largely outward goods. And thus sin has its pleasures, and escapes many of its natural and proper fruits. We live in a world where, if we please, we may forget our-

selves, may delude ourselves, may intoxicate our minds with false hopes, and may find for a time a deceitful joy in an evil course. In this respect the future will differ from the present world. After death, character will produce its full effect. According to the Scriptures, the color of our future existence will be wholly determined by the habits and principles which we carry into it. The circumstances which in this life prevent vice, sin, wrong-doing, from inflicting pain, will not operate hereafter. There the evil mind will be exposed to its own terrible agency, and nothing, nothing will interfere between the transgressor and his own awakened conscience. I ask you to pause, and weigh this distinction between the present and future. In the present life, we have, as I have said, the means of escaping, amusing, and forgetting ourselves. Once, in the course of every daily revolution of the sun, we all of us find refuge, and many a long refuge, in sleep; and he who has lived without God, and in violation of his duty, hears not, for hours, a whisper of the monitor within. But sleep is a function of our present animal frame, and let not the transgressor anticipate this boon in the world of retribution before him. It may be, and he has reason to fear, that in that state repose will not weigh down his eyelids, that conscience will not slumber there, that night and day the same reproaching voice is to cry within, that unrepented sin will fasten with unrelaxing grasp on the ever-waking soul. What an immense change in condition would the removal of this single alleviation of suffering produce?

Again; in the present state, how many pleasant sights, scenes, voices, motions, draw us from ourselves; and he who has done wrong, how easily may he forget it,

perhaps mock at it, under the bright light of this sun, on this fair earth, at the table of luxury, and amidst cheerful associates. In the state of retribution, he who has abused the present state, will find no such means of escaping the wages of sin. The precise mode in which such a man is to exist hereafter, I know not. But I know, that it will offer nothing to amuse him, to dissipate thought, to turn him away from himself; nothing to which he can fly for refuge from the inward penalties of transgression.

In the present life, I have said, the outward creation, by its interesting objects, draws the evil man from himself. It seems to me probable, that, in the future, the whole creation will, through sin, be turned into a source of suffering, and will perpetually throw back the evil mind on its own transgressions. I can briefly state the reflections which lead to this anticipation. The Scriptures strongly imply, if not positively teach, that in the future life we shall exist in connexion with some material frame; and the doctrine is sustained by reason; for it can hardly be thought, that in a creation which is marked by gradual change and progress, we should make at once the mighty transition from our present state into a purely spiritual or unembodied existence. Now in the present state we find, that the mind has an immense power over the body, and, when diseased, often communicates disease to its sympathizing companion. I believe, that, in the future state, the mind will have this power of conforming its outward frame to itself, incomparably more than here. We must never forget, that in that world mind or character is to exert an all-powerful sway; and accordingly, it is rational to believe, that the corrupt and deformed mind, which

wants moral goodness, or a spirit of concord with God and with the universe, will create for itself, as its fit dwelling, a deformed body, which will also want concord or harmony with all things around it. Suppose this to exist, and the whole creation which now amuses, may become an instrument of suffering, fixing the soul with a more harrowing consciousness on itself. You know that even now, in consequence of certain derangements of the nervous system, the beautiful light gives acute pain, and sounds, which once delighted us, become shrill and distressing. How often this excessive irritableness of the body has its origin in moral disorders, perhaps few of us suspect. I apprehend, indeed, that we should be all amazed, were we to learn to what extent the body is continually incapacitated for enjoyment, and made susceptible of suffering, by sins of the heart and life. That delicate part of our organization, on which sensibility, pain, and pleasure depend, is, I believe, peculiarly alive to the touch of moral evil. How easily, then, may the mind hereafter frame the future body according to itself, so that, in proportion to its vice, it will receive, through its organs and senses, impressions of gloom, which it will feel to be the natural productions of its own depravity, and which will in this way give a terrible energy to conscience! For myself, I see no need of a local hell for the sinner after death. When I reflect, how, in the present world, a guilty mind has power to deform the countenance, to undermine health, to poison pleasure, to darken the fairest scenes of nature, to turn prosperity into a curse, I can easily understand how, in the world to come, sin, working without obstruction according to its own nature, should spread the gloom of a dungeon over the whole

creation, and wherever it goes, should turn the universe into a hell.

In these remarks I presume not to be the prophet of the future world. I only wish you to feel how terribly sin is hereafter to work its own misery, and how false and dangerous it is to argue from your present power of escaping its consequences, that you may escape them in the life to come. Let each of us be assured, that by abusing this world, we shall not earn a better. The Scriptures announce a state of more exact and rigorous retribution than the present. Let this truth sink into our hearts. It shows us, what I have aimed to establish, that to do wrong is to incur the greatest of calamities, that sin is the chief of evils. May I not say, that nothing else deserves the name? No other evil will follow us beyond the grave. Poverty, disease, the world's scorn, the pain of bereaved affection, these cease at the grave. The purified spirit lays down there every burden. One and only one evil can be carried from this world to the next, and that is, the evil within us, moral evil, guilt, crime, ungoverned passion, the depraved mind, the memory of a wasted or ill-spent life, the character which has grown up under neglect of God's voice in the soul and in his word. This, this will go with us, to stamp itself on our future frames, to darken our future being, to separate us like an impassible gulf from our Creator and from pure and happy beings, to be as a consuming fire and an undying worm.

I have spoken of the pains and penalties of moral evil, or of wrong-doing, in the world to come. How long they will endure, I know not. Whether they will issue in the reformation and happiness of the sufferer, or will terminate in the extinction of his conscious

being, is a question on which Scripture throws no clear light. Plausible arguments may be adduced in support of both these doctrines. On this and on other points revelation aims not to give precise information, but to fix in us a deep impression, that great suffering awaits a disobedient, wasted, immoral, irreligious life. To fasten this impression, to make it a deliberate and practical conviction, is more needful than to ascertain the mode or duration of future suffering. May the views this day given, lead us all to self-communion, and to new energy, watchfulness, and prayer against our sins. May they teach us, that to do wrong, to neglect or violate any known duty, is of all evils the most fearful. Let every act, or feeling, or motive, which bears the brand of guilt, seem to us more terrible than the worst calamities of life. Let us dread it more than the agonies of the most painful death.

IMMORTALITY.

2 Timothy i. 10: "Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

Immortality is the glorious discovery of Christianity. I say discovery, not because a future life was wholly unknown before Christ, but because it was so revealed by him as to become, to a considerable extent, a new doctrine. Before Christ, immortality was a conjecture or a vague hope. Jesus, by his teaching and resurrection, has made it a certainty. Again, before Christ, a future life lent little aid to virtue. It was seized upon by the imagination and passions, and so perverted by them as often to minister to vice. In Christianity this doctrine is wholly turned to a moral use; and the Future is revealed only to give motives, resolution, force, to self-conflict and to a holy life.

My aim in this discourse is, to strengthen, if I may, your conviction of immortality; and I have thought that I may do this by showing, that this great truth is also a dictate of nature; that reason, though unable to establish it, yet accords with and adopts it; that it is written alike in God's word and in the soul. It is plain-

ly rational to expect, that, if man was made for immortality, the marks of this destination will be found in his very constitution, and that these marks will grow stronger in proportion to the unfolding of his faculties. I would show, that this expectation proves just, that the teaching of revelation, in regard to a future life, finds a strong response in our own nature.

This topic is the more important, because to some men there seem to be appearances in nature unfavorable to immortality. To many, the constant operation of decay in all the works of creation, the dissolution of all the forms of animal and vegetable nature, gives a feeling, as if destruction were the law to which we and all beings are subjected.

It has often been said by the skeptic, that the *races* or classes of being are alone perpetual, that all the *individuals* which compose them are doomed to perish. Now I affirm, that the more we know of the Mind, the more we see reason to distinguish it from the animal and vegetable races which grow and decay around us; and that in its very nature we see reason for exempting it from the universal law of destruction. To this point, I now ask your attention.

When we look round us on the earth, we do indeed see every thing changing, decaying, passing away; and so inclined are we to reason from analogy or resemblance, that it is not wonderful that the dissolution of all the organized forms of matter should seem to us to announce our own destruction. But we overlook the distinctions between matter and mind; and these are so immense as to justify the directly opposite conclusion Let me point out some of these distinctions.

1. When we look at the organized productions of nature, we see that they require only a limited time and most of them a very short time, to reach their perfection, and accomplish their end. Take, for example, that noble production, a tree. Having reached a certain height and borne leaves, flowers, and fruit, it has nothing more to do. Its powers are fully developed; it has no hidden capacities, of which its buds and fruit are only the beginnings and pledges. Its design is fulfilled; the principle of life within it can effect no more. Not so the mind. We can never say of this, as of the full-grown tree in autumn, It has answered its end, it has done its work, its capacity is exhausted. On the contrary, the nature, powers, desires, and purposes of the mind are all undefined. We never feel, when a great intellect has risen to an original thought, or a vast discovery, that it has now accomplished its whole purpose, reached its bound, and can yield no other or higher fruits. On the contrary, our conviction of its resources is enlarged; we discern more of its affinity to the inexhaustible intelligence of its Author. In every step of its progress, we see a new impulse gained and the pledge of nobler acquirements. So, when a pure and resolute mind has made some great sacrifice to truth and duty, has manifested its attachment to God and man in singular trials, we do not feel as if the whole energy of virtuous principle were now put forth, as if the measure of excellence were filled, as if the maturest fruits were now borne, and henceforth the soul could only repeat itself. We feel, on the contrary, that virtue by illustrious efforts replenishes instead of wasting its life; that the mind by perseverence in well-doing, instead of sinking into a mechanical tameness, is able to conceive of higher duties, is

armed for a nobler daring, and grows more efficient in charity. The mind, by going forward, does not reach insurmountable prison-walls, but learns more and more the boundlessness of its powers, and of the range for which it was created.

Let me place this topic in another light, which may show, even more strongly, the contrast of the mind with the noblest productions of matter. My meaning may best be conveyed by reverting to the tree. We consider the tree as having answered its highest purpose, when it yields a particular fruit. We judge of its perfection by a fixed, positive, definite product. The mind, however, in proportion to its improvement, becomes conscious that its perfection consists not in fixed, prescribed effects, not in exact and defined attainments, but in an original, creative, unconfinable energy, which yields new products, which carries it into new fields of thought and new efforts for religion and humanity. This truth indeed is so obvious, that even the least improved may discern it. You all feel, that the most perfect mind is not that which works in a prescribed way, which thinks and acts according to prescribed rules, but that which has a spring of action in itself, which combines anew the knowledge received from other minds, which explores its hidden and multiplied relations, and gives it forth in fresh and higher forms. The perfection of the tree, then, lies in a precise or definite product. That of the mind lies in an indefinite and boundless energy. The first implies limits. To set limits to the mind, would destroy that original power in which its perfection consists. Here, then, we observe a distinction between material forms and the mind; and from the destruction of the first, which, as we see, attain perfection and fulfil their pur-

pose in a limited duration, we cannot argue to the destruction of the last, which plainly possesses the capacity of a progress without end.

2. We have pointed out one contrast between the mind and material forms. The latter, we have seen, by their nature have bounds. The tree in a short time, and by rising and spreading a short distance, accomplishes its end. I now add, that the system of nature to which the tree belongs, requires that it should stop where it does. Were it to grow for ever, it would be an infinite mischief. A single plant, endued with the principle of unlimited expansion, would in the progress of centuries overshadow nations and exclude every other growth, would exhaust the earth's whole fertility. Material forms, then, must have narrow bounds, and their usefulness requires that their life and growth should often be arrested even before reaching the limits prescribed by nature. But the indefinite expansion of the mind, instead of warring with and counteracting the system of creation, harmonizes with and perfects it. One tree, should it grow for ever, would exclude other forms of vegetable life. One mind, in proportion to its expansion, awakens and in a sense creates other minds. It multiplies, instead of exhausting, the nutriment which other understandings need. A mind, the more it has of intellectual and moral life, the more it spreads life and power around it. It is an ever-enlarging source of thought and love. Let me here add, that the mind, by unlimited growth, not only yields a greater amount of good to other beings, but it produces continually new forms of good. This is an important distinction. Were the tree to spread indefinitely, it would abound more in fruit, but in fruit of the same

kind; and, by excluding every other growth, it would destroy the variety of products, which now contribute to health and enjoyment. But the mind, in its progress, is perpetually yielding new fruits, new forms of thought and virtue and sanctity. It always contains within itself the germs of higher influences than it has ever put forth, the buds of fruits which it has never borne. Thus the very reason which requires the limitation of material forms, I mean the good of the whole system, seems to require the unlimited growth of mind.

3. Another distinction between material forms and the mind is, that to the former destruction is no loss. They exist for others wholly, in no degree for themselves; and others only can sorrow for their fall. The mind, on the contrary, has a deep interest in its own existence. In this respect, indeed, it is distinguished from the animal as well as the vegetable. To the animal, the past is a blank, and so is the future. The present is every thing. But to the mind the present is comparatively nothing. Its great sources of happiness are memory and hope. It has power over the past, not only the power of recalling it, but of turning to good all its experience, its errors and sufferings as well as its successes. It has power over the future, not only the power of anticipating it, but of bringing the present to bear upon it, and of sowing for it the seeds of a golden harvest. To a mind capable of thus connecting itself with all duration, of spreading itself through times past and to come, existence becomes infinitely dear, and, what is most worthy of observation, its interest in its own being increases with its progress in power and virtue. An improved mind understands the *greatness of* its own nature, and the worth of existence,

as these cannot be understood by the unimproved. The thought of its own destruction suggests to it an extent of ruin, which the latter cannot comprehend. The thought of such faculties as reason, conscience, and moral will, being extinguished, — of powers, akin to the divine energy, being annihilated by their Author, — of truth and virtue, those images of God, being blotted out, — of progress towards perfection, being broken off almost at its beginning, — this is a thought fitted to overwhelm a mind, in which the consciousness of its own spiritual nature is in a good degree unfolded. In other words, the more the mind is true to itself and to God, the more it clings to existence, the more it shrinks from extinction as an infinite loss. Would not its destruction, then, be a very different thing from the destruction of material beings, and does the latter furnish an analogy or presumption in support of the former? To me, the undoubted fact, that the mind thirsts for continued being, just in proportion as it obeys the will of its Maker, is a proof, next to irresistible, of its being destined by him for immortality.

4. Let me add one more distinction between the mind and material forms. I return to the tree. We speak of the tree as *destroyed*. We say that destruction is the order of nature, and some say that man must not hope to escape the universal law. Now we deceive ourselves in this use of words. There is in reality no destruction in the material world. True, the tree is resolved into its elements. But its elements survive, and, still more, they survive to fulfil the same end which they before accomplished. Not a power of nature is lost. The particles of the decayed tree are only left at liberty to form

new, perhaps more beautiful and useful combinations. They may shoot up into more luxuriant foliage, or enter into the structure of the highest animals. But were mind to perish, there would be absolute, irretrievable destruction; for mind, from its nature, is something individual, an uncompounded essence, which cannot be broken into parts, and enter into union with other minds. I am myself, and can become no other being. My experience, my history, cannot become my neighbour's. My consciousness, my memory, my interest in my past life, my affections, cannot be transferred. If in any instance I have withstood temptation, and through such resistance have acquired power over myself and a claim to the approbation of my fellow-beings, this resistance, this power, this claim are my own; I cannot make them another's. I can give away my property, my limbs; but that which makes myself, in other words, my consciousness, my recollections, my feelings, my hopes, these can never become parts of another mind. In the extinction of a thinking, moral being, who has gained truth and virtue, there would be an absolute destruction. This event would not be as the setting of the sun, which is a transfer of light to new regions; but a quenching of the light. It would be a ruin such as nature nowhere exhibits, a ruin of what is infinitely more precious than the outward universe, and is not, therefore, to be inferred from any of the changes of the material world.

I am aware, that views of this nature, intended to show us that immortality is impressed on the soul itself, fail to produce conviction from various causes. There are not a few, who are so accustomed to look on the errors and crimes of society, that human nature seems to them little raised above the brutal; and they hear,

with a secret incredulity, of those distinctions and capacities of the mind which point to its perpetual existence. To such men, I might say, that it is a vicious propensity which leads them to fasten continually and exclusively on the sins of human nature; just as it is criminal to fix the thoughts perpetually on the miseries of human life, and to see nothing but evil in the order of creation and the providence of God. But, passing over this, I allow that human nature abounds in crime. But this does not destroy my conviction of its greatness and immortality. I say, that I see in crime itself the proofs of human greatness and of an immortal nature. The position may seem extravagant, but it may be fully sustained.

I ask you first to consider, what is implied in crime. Consider in what it originates. It has its origin in the noblest principle that can belong to any being; I mean, in moral freedom. There can be no crime without liberty of action, without moral power. Were man a machine, were he a mere creature of sensation and impulse, like the brute, he could do no wrong. It is only because he has the faculties of reason and conscience, and a power over himself, that he is capable of contracting guilt. Thus great guilt is itself a testimony to the high endowments of the soul.

In the next place, let me ask you to consider, whence it is that man sins. He sins by being exposed to temptation. Now the great design of temptation plainly is, that the soul, by withstanding it, should gain strength, should make progress, should become a proper object of divine reward. That is, man sins through an exposure which is designed to carry him forward to perfection, so that the cause of his guilt points to a continued and improved existence.

In the next place, I say, that guilt has a pecular consciousness belonging to it, which speaks strongly of a future life. It carries with it intimations of retribution. Its natural associate is fear. The connexion of misery with crime is anticipated by a kind of moral instinct; and the very circumstance, that the unprincipled man sometimes escapes present suffering, suggests more strongly a future state, where this apparent injustice will be redressed, and where present prosperity will become an aggravation of woe. Guilt sometimes speaks of a future state even in louder and more solemn tones than virtue. It has been known to overwhelm the spirit with terrible forebodings, and has found through its presentiments the hell which it feared. Thus guilt does not destroy, but corroborates, the proofs contained in the soul itself of its own future being.

Let me add one more thought. The sins, which abound in the world, and which are so often adduced to chill our belief in the capacities and vast prospects of human nature, serve to place in stronger relief, and in brighter light, the examples of piety and virtue, which all must acknowledge, are to be found among the guilty multitude. A mind which, in such a world, amidst so many corrupting influences, holds fast to truth, duty, and God, is a nobler mind than any which could be formed in the absence of such temptation. Thus the great sinfulness of the world makes the virtue which exists in it more glorious; and the very struggles which the good man has to maintain with its allurements and persecutions, prepare him for a brighter reward. To me such views are singularly interesting and encouraging. I delight to behold the testimony which sin itself furnishes to man's greatness and immortality. I indeed see great guilt on

earth; but I see it giving occasion to great moral strength, and to singular devotion and virtue in the good, and thus throwing on human nature a lustre which more than compensates for its own deformity. I do not shut my eyes on the guilt of my race. I see, in history, human malignity, so aggravated, so unrelenting, as even to pursue with torture, and to doom to the most agonizing death, the best of human beings. But when I see these beings unmoved by torture; meek, and calm, and forgiving in their agonies; superior to death, and never so glorious as in the last hour, — I forget the guilt which persecutes them, in my admiration of their virtue. In their sublime constancy, I see a testimony to the worth and immortality of human nature, that outweighs the wickedness of which they seem to be the victims; and I feel an assurance, which nothing can wrest from me, that the godlike virtue, which has thus been driven from earth, will find a home, an everlasting home, in its native heaven. Thus sin itself becomes a witness to the future life of man.

I have thus, my hearers, endeavoured to show, that our nature, the more it is inquired into, discovers more clearly the impress of immortality. I do not mean, that this evidence supersedes all other. From its very nature it can only be understood thoroughly by improved and purified minds. The proof of immortality, which is suited to all understandings, is found in the Gospel, sealed by the blood and confirmed by the resurrection of Christ. But this, I think, is made more impressive, by a demonstration of its harmony with the teachings of nature. To me, nature and revelation speak with one voice on the great theme of man's future being. Let not their joint witness be unheard.

How full, how bright, are the evidences of this grand truth. How weak are the common arguments, which skepticism arrays against it. To me there is but one objection against immortality, if objection it may be called, and this arises from the very greatness of the truth. My mind sometimes sinks under its weight, is lost in its immensity; I scarcely dare believe that such a good is placed within my reach. When I think of myself, as existing through all future ages, as surviving this earth and that sky, as exempted from every imperfection and error of my present being, as clothed with an angel's glory, as comprehending with my intellect and embracing in my affections an extent of creation compared with which the earth is a point; when I think of myself, as looking on the outward universe with an organ of vision that will reveal to me a beauty and harmony and order not now imagined, and as having an access to the minds of the wise and good, which will make them in a sense my own; when I think of myself, as forming friendships with innumerable beings of rich and various intellect and of the noblest virtue, as introduced to the society of heaven, as meeting there the great and excellent, of whom I have read in history, as joined with "the just made perfect" in an ever-enlarging ministry of benevolence, as conversing with Jesus Christ with the familiarity of friendship, and especially as having an immediate intercourse with God, such as the closest intimacies of earth dimly shadow forth; — when this thought of my future being comes to me, whilst I hope, I also fear; the blessedness seems too great; the consciousness of present weakness and unworthiness is almost too strong for hope. But when, in this frame of mind. I look round on the creation, and see there the

marks of an omnipotent goodness, to which nothing is impossible, and from which every thing may be hoped; when I see around me the proofs of an Infinite Father, who must desire the perpetual progress of his intellectual offspring; when I look next at the human mind, and see what powers a few years have unfolded, and discern in it the capacity of everlasting improvement; and especially when I look at Jesus, the conqueror of death, the heir of immortality, who has gone as the forerunner of mankind into the mansions of light and purity, I can and do admit the almost overpowering thought of the everlasting life, growth, felicity of the human soul.

To each of us, my friends, is this felicity offered; a good which turns to darkness and worthlessness the splendor and excellence of the most favored lot on earth. I say, it is *offered*. It cannot be forced on us; from its nature, it must be won. Immortal happiness is nothing more than the unfolding of our own minds, the full, bright exercise of our best powers; and these powers are never to be unfolded here or hereafter, but through our own free exertion. To anticipate a higher existence whilst we neglect our own souls, is a delusion on which reason frowns no less than revelation. Dream not of a heaven into which you may enter, live here as you may. To such as waste the present state, the future will not, cannot, bring happiness. There is no concord between them and that world of purity. A human being, who has lived without God, and without self-improvement, can no more enjoy Heaven, than a mouldering body, lifted from the tomb, and placed amidst beautiful prospects, can enjoy the light through its decayed eyes, or feel the balmy air which blows away its dust. My hearers, immortality is a glorious doctrine; but not given us

for speculation or amusement. Its happiness is to be realized only through our own struggles with ourselves, only through our own reaching forward to new virtue and piety. To be joined with Christ in Heaven, we must be joined with him now in spirit, in the conquest of temptation, in charity and well-doing. Immortality should begin here. The seed is now to be sown, which is to expand for ever. "Be not weary then in well-doing; for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not."

LOVE TO CHRIST.

EPHESIANS vi. 24: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

I PROPOSE in this discourse, to speak of Love to Christ, and especially of the foundations on which it rests. I will not detain you by remarks on the importance of the subject. I trust, that you feel it, and that no urgency is needed to secure your serious attention.

Love to Christ is said, and said with propriety, to be a duty, not of Natural, but of Revealed religion. Other precepts of Christianity are dictates of nature as well as of revelation. They result from the original and permanent relations which we bear to our Creator and our fellow-creatures; and are written by God on the mind, as well as in the Bible. For example, gratitude towards the Author of our being, and justice and benevolence towards men, are inculcated with more or less distinctness by our moral faculties; they are parts of the inward law which belongs to a rational mind; and accordingly, wherever men are found, you find some conviction of these duties, some sense of their obligation to a higher power and to one another. But the same is not true of the duty of love to Jesus Christ; for as the knowledge of him is not communicated by

nature, as his name is not written, like that of God on the heavens and earth, but is confined to countries where his Gospel is preached, it is plain that no sense of obligation to him can be felt beyond these bounds. No regard is due or can be paid to him beyond these. It is commonly said, therefore, that love to Christ is a duty of revealed, not natural religion, and this language is correct; but let it not mislead us. Let us not imagine, that attachment to Jesus is an arbitrary duty, that it is unlike our other duties, that it is separate from common virtue, or that it is not founded, like all virtues, in our constitution, or not recognised and enforced by natural conscience. We say, that nature does not enjoin this regard to the Saviour, simply because it does not make him known; but, as soon as he is made known, nature enjoins love and veneration towards him as truly as towards God or towards excellent men. Reason and conscience teach us to regard him with a strong and tender interest. Love to him is not an arbitrary precept. It is not unlike our other affections; it requires for its culture no peculiar influences from heaven; it stands on the same ground with all our duties; it is to be strengthened by the same means. It is essentially the same sentiment, feeling, or principle, which we put forth towards other excellent beings, whether in heaven or on earth.

I make these remarks, because I apprehend that the duty of loving Jesus Christ has been so urged, as to seem to many particularly mysterious and obscure; and the consequence has been, that by some it has been neglected as unnatural, unreasonable, and unconnected with common life; whilst others, in seeking to cherish it, have rushed into wild, extravagant, and feverish

emotions. I would rescue, if I can, this duty from neglect on the one hand, and from abuse on the other; and to do this, nothing is necessary, but to show the true ground and nature of love to Christ. You will then see, not only that it is an exalted and generous sentiment, but that it blends with, and gives support to, all the virtuous principles of the mind, and to all the duties, even the most common, of active life.

There is another great good, which may result from a just explanation of the love due to Christ. You will see, that this sentiment has no dependence, at least no necessary dependence, on the opinions we may form about his place, or rank, in the universe. This topic has convulsed the church for ages. Christians have cast away the spirit, in settling the precise dignity, of their Master. That this question is unimportant, I do not say. That some views are more favorable to love towards him than others, I believe; but I maintain that all opinions, adopted by different sects, include the foundation, on which veneration and attachment are due to our common Lord. This truth, for I hold it to be a plain truth, is so fitted to heal the wounds and allay the uncharitable fervors of Christ's divided church, that I shall rejoice, if I can set it forth to others as clearly as it rises to my own mind.

To accomplish the ends now expressed, I am led to propose to you one great but simple question. What is it that constitutes Christ's claim to love and respect? What is it that is to be loved in Christ? Why are we to hold him dear? I answer, There is but one ground for virtuous affection, in the universe, but one object worthy of cherished and enduring love in heaven or on earth, and that is, Moral Goodness. I make no excep-

tions. My principle applies to all beings, to the Creator as well as to his creatures. The claim of God to the love of his rational offspring rests on the rectitude and benevolence of his will. It is the moral beauty and grandeur of his character, to which alone we are bound to pay homage. The only power, which can and ought to be loved, is a beneficent and righteous power. The creation is glorious, and binds us to supreme and everlasting love to God, only because it sprung from and shows forth this energy of goodness ; nor has any being a claim on love, any farther than this same energy dwells in him, and is manifested in him. I know no exception to this principle. I can conceive of no being, who can have any claim to affection but what rests on his character, meaning by this the spirit and principles which constitute his mind, and from which he acts ; nor do I know but one character which entitles a being to our hearts, and it is that which the Scriptures express by the word Righteousness ; which in man is often called Virtue, in God, Holiness ; which consists essentially in supreme reverence for and adoption of what is right ; and of which benevolence, or universal charity, is the brightest manifestation.

After these remarks, you will easily understand what I esteem the ground of love to Christ. It is his spotless purity, his moral perfection, his unrivalled goodness. It is the spirit of his religion, which is the spirit of God, dwelling in him without measure. Of consequence to love Christ is to love the perfection of virtue, of righteousness, of benevolence ; and the great excellence of this love is, that, by cherishing it, we imbibe, we strengthen in our own souls, the most illustrious virtue, and through Jesus become like to God.

From the view now given, you see that love to Jesus Christ is a perfectly natural sentiment; I mean, one which our natural sense of right enjoins and approves, and which our minds are constituted to feel and to cherish, as truly as any affection to the good whom we know on earth. It is not a theological, mysterious feeling, which some supernatural and inexplicable agency must generate within us. It has its foundation or root in the very frame of our minds, in that sense of right by which we are enabled to discern, and bound to love, perfection. I observe next, that, according to this view, it is, as I have said, an exalted and generous affection; for it brings us into communion and contact with the sublimest character ever revealed among men. It includes and nourishes great thoughts and high aspirations, and gives us here on earth the benefit of intercourse with celestial beings.

Do you not also see, that the love of Christ, according to the view now given of it, has no dependence on any particular views which are formed of his nature by different sects? According to all sects, is he not perfect, spotless in virtue, the representative and resplendent image of the moral goodness and rectitude of God? However contending sects may be divided as to other points, they all agree in the moral perfection of his character. All recognise his most glorious peculiarity, his sublime and unsullied goodness. All therefore see in him that which alone deserves love and veneration.

I am aware, that other views are not uncommon. It is said, that a true love to Christ requires just opinions concerning him, and that they who form different opinions of him, however they may use the same name, do not love the same being. We must *know* him, it is said,

in order to esteem him as we ought. Be it so. To love Christ we must know him. But what must we know respecting him? Must we know his countenance and form, must we know the manner in which he existed before his birth, or the manner in which he now exists? Must we know his precise rank in the universe, his precise power and influence? On all these points, indeed, just views would be gratifying and auxiliary to virtue. But love to Christ may exist, and grow strong without them. What we need to this end, is the knowledge of his mind, his virtues, his principles of action. No matter how profoundly we speculate about Christ, or how profusely we heap upon him epithets of praise and admiration; if we do not understand the distinguishing virtues of his character, and see and feel their grandeur, we are as ignorant of him as if we had never heard his name, nor can we offer him an acceptable love. I desire indeed to know Christ's rank in the universe; but rank is nothing, except as it proves and manifests superior virtue. High station only degrades a being who fills it unworthily. It is the mind which gives dignity to the office, not the office to the mind. All glory is of the soul. Accordingly we know little or nothing of another until we look into his soul. I cannot be said to know a being of a singularly great character, because I have learned from what region he came, to what family he belongs, or what rank he sustains. I can only know him as far as I discern the greatness of his spirit, the unconquerable strength of his benevolence, his loyalty to God and duty, his power to act and suffer in a good and righteous cause, and his intimate communion with God. Who knows Christ best? I answer, It is he who, in reading his history, sees and feels most distinctly and

deeply the perfection by which he was distinguished. Who knows Jesus best? It is he, who, not resting in general and almost unmeaning praises, becomes acquainted with what was peculiar, characteristic, and individual in his mind, and who has thus framed to himself, not a dim image called Jesus, but a living being, with distinct and glorious features, and with all the reality of a well-known friend. Who best knows Jesus? I answer, It is he, who deliberately feels and knows, that his character is of a higher order than all other characters which have appeared on earth, and who thirsts to commune with and resemble it. I hope I am plain. When I hear, as I do, men disputing about Jesus, and imagining that they know him by settling some theory as to his generation in time or eternity, or as to his rank in the scale of being, I feel that their knowledge of him is about as great as I should have of some saint or hero, by studying his genealogy. These controversies have built up a technical theology, but give no insight into the mind and heart of Jesus; and without this the true knowledge of him cannot be enjoyed. And here I would observe, not in the spirit of reproach, but from a desire to do good, that I know not a more effectual method of hiding Jesus from us, of keeping us strangers to him, than the inculcation of the doctrine which makes him the same being with his Father, makes him God himself. This doctrine throws over him a mistiness. For myself, when I attempt to bring it home, I have not a real being before me, not a soul which I can understand and sympathize with, but a vague, shifting image, which gives nothing of the stability of knowledge. A being, consisting of two natures, two souls, one Divine and another human, one finite and another infinite, is made up of quali

ties which destroy one another, and leave nothing for distinct apprehension. This compound of different minds, and of contradictory attributes, I cannot, if I would, regard as one conscious person, one intelligent agent. It strikes me almost irresistibly as a fiction. On the other hand, Jesus, contemplated as he is set before us in the Gospel, as one mind, one heart, answering to my own in all its essential powers and affections, but purified, enlarged, exalted, so as to constitute him the unsullied image of God and a perfect model, is a being who bears the marks of reality, whom I can understand, whom I can receive into my heart as the best of friends, with whom I can become intimate, and whose society I can and do anticipate among the chief blessings of my future being.

My friends, I have now stated, in general, what knowledge of Christ is most important, and is alone required in order to a true attachment to him. Let me still farther illustrate my views, by descending to one or two particulars. Among the various excellences of Jesus, he was distinguished by a benevolence so deep, so invincible, that injury and outrage had no power over it. His kindness towards men was in no degree diminished by their wrong-doing. The only intercession which he offered in his sufferings, was for those who at that very moment were wreaking on him their vengeance; and, what is more remarkable, he not only prayed for them, but with an unexampled generosity and candor, urged in their behalf the only extenuation which their conduct would admit. Now, to know Jesus Christ, is to understand this attribute of his mind, to understand the strength and triumph of the benevolent principle in this severest trial, to understand the energy with which he then held

fast the virtue which he had enjoined. It is to see in the mind of Jesus at that moment a moral grandeur which raised him above all around him. This is to know him. I will suppose now a man to have studied all the controversies about Christ's nature, and to have arrived at the truest notions of his rank in the universe. But this incident in Christ's history, this discovery of his character, has never impressed him; the glory of a philanthropy which embraces one's enemies, has never dawned upon him. With all his right opinions about the Unity, or the Trinity, he lives, and acts towards others, very much as if Jesus had never lived or died. Now I say, that such a man does not know Christ. I say, that he is a stranger to him. I say, that the great truth is hidden from him; that his skill in religious controversy is of little more use to him than would be the learning by rote of a language which he does not understand. He knows the name of Christ, but the excellence which that name imports, and which gives it its chief worth, is to him as an unknown tongue.

I have referred to one view of Christ's character. I might go through his whole life. I will only observe, that in the New Testament, the crucifixion of Jesus is always set forth as the most illustrious portion of his history. The spirit of self-sacrifice, of deliberate self-immolation, of calm, patient endurance of the death of the cross, in the cause of truth, piety, virtue, human happiness, — this particular manifestation of love is always urged upon us in the New Testament, as the crowning glory of Jesus Christ. To understand this part of his character; to understand him when he gave himself up to the shame and anguish of crucifixion; to understand that sympathy with human misery, that love

of human nature, that thirst for the recovery of the human soul, that zeal for human virtue, that energy of moral principle, that devotion to God's purposes, through which the severest suffering was chosen and borne, and into which no suffering, or scorn, or desertion, or ingratitude, could infuse the least degree of selfishness, unkindness, doubt, or infirmity, — to understand this, is to understand Jesus; and he who wants sensibility to this, be his speculations what they may, has every thing to learn respecting the Saviour.

You will see, from the views now given, that I consider love to Christ as requiring nothing so much, as that we fix our thoughts on the excellence of his character, study it, penetrate our minds with what was peculiar in it, and cherish profound veneration for it; and consequently I fear, that attachment to him has been diminished by the habit of regarding other things in Christ as more important than his lovely and sublime virtues.

Christians have been prone to fix on something mysterious in his nature, or else on the dignity of his offices, as his chief claim; and in this way his supreme glory has been obscured. His nature and offices I, of course, would not disparage; but let them not be exalted above his Moral Worth. I maintain that this gives to his nature and offices all their claims to love and veneration, and that we understand them only as far as we see this to pervade them. This principle I would uphold against Christians of very different modes of faith.

First, there are Christians who maintain that Jesus Christ is to be loved as the Son of God, understanding by this title some mysterious connexion and identity with the Father. Far be it from me to deny, that the Divine Sonship of Jesus constitutes his true claim on our affec-

tion; but I do deny, that the mysterious properties of this relation form any part of this claim; for it is very clear that love to a being must rest on what we know of him, and not on unknown and unintelligible attributes. In saying that the Divine Sonship of Jesus is the great foundation of attachment to him, I say nothing inconsistent with the doctrine of this discourse, that the moral excellence of Jesus is the great object and ground of the love which is due to him. Indeed, I only repeat the principle, that he is to be loved exclusively for the virtues of his character; for what, I ask, is the great idea involved in his filial relation to God? To be the Son of God, in the chief and highest sense of that term, is to bear the likeness, to possess the spirit, to be partaker of the moral perfections of God. This is the essential idea. To be God's Son is to be united with him by consent and accordance of mind. Jesus was the only begotten Son, because he was the perfect image and representative of God, especially of divine philanthropy; because he espoused as his own the benevolent purposes of God towards the human race, and yielded himself to their accomplishment with an entire self-sacrifice. To know Jesus as the Son of God, is not to understand what theologians have written about his eternal generation, or about a mystical, incomprehensible union between Christ and his Father. It is something far higher and more instructive. It is to see in Christ, if I may say so, the lineaments of the Universal Father. It is to discern in him a godlike purity and goodness. It is to understand his harmony with the Divine Mind, and the entireness and singleness of love with which he devoted himself to the purposes of God, and the interests of the human race. Of consequence, to love

Jesus as the Son of God, is to love the spotless purity and godlike charity of his soul.

There are other Christians who differ widely from those of whom I have now spoken, but who conceive that Christ's Offices, Inspiration, Miracles, are his chief claims to veneration, and who, I fear, in extolling these, have overlooked what is incomparably more glorious, the moral dignity of his mind, the purity and inexhaustibleness of his benevolence. It is possible, that to many who hear me, Christ seems to have been more exalted when he received from his Father supernatural light and truth, or when with superhuman energy he quelled the storm and raised the dead, than when he wept over the city which was in a few days to doom him to the most shameful and agonizing death; and yet, his chief glory consisted in the spirit through which these tears were shed. Christians have yet to learn that inspiration, and miracles, and outward dignities, are nothing compared with the soul. We all need to understand better than we have done, that noble passage of Paul, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and understand all mysteries, and have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [disinterestedness, love], I am nothing;" and this is as true of Christ as of Paul. Indeed it is true of all beings, and yet, I fear, it is not felt as it should be by the multitude of Christians.

You tell me, my friends, that Christ's unparalleled inspiration, his perpetual reception of light from God, that this was his supreme distinction; and a great distinction undoubtedly it was: but I affirm, that Christ's inspiration, though conferred on him without measure, gives him no claim to veneration or love, any farther

than it found within him a virtue, which accorded with, welcomed, and adopted it; any farther than his own heart responded to the truths he received; any farther than he sympathized with, and espoused as his own, the benevolent purposes of God, which he was sent to announce; any farther than the spirit of the religion which he preached was his own spirit, and was breathed from his life as well as from his lips. In other words, his inspiration was made glorious through his virtues. Mere inspiration seems to me a very secondary thing. Suppose the greatest truths in the universe to be revealed supernaturally to a being who should take no interest in them, who should not see and feel their greatness, but should repeat them mechanically, as they were put into his mouth by the Deity. Such a man would be inspired, and would teach the greatest verities, and yet he would be nothing, and would have no claim to reverence.

The excellence of Jesus did not consist in his mere inspiration, but in the virtue and love which prepared him to receive it, and by which it was made effectual to the world. He did not passively hear, and mechanically repeat, certain doctrines from God, but his whole soul accorded with what he heard. Every truth which he uttered came warm and living from his own mind; and it was this pouring of his own soul into his instructions, which gave them much of their power. Whence came the authority and energy, the conscious dignity, the tenderness and sympathy, with which Jesus taught? They came not from inspiration, but from the mind of him who was inspired. His personal virtues gave power to his teachings; and without these no inspiration could

have made him the source of such light and strength as he now communicates to mankind.

My friends, I have aimed to show in this discourse, that the virtue, purity, rectitude of Jesus Christ, is his most honorable distinction, and constitutes his great claim to veneration and love. I can direct you to nothing in Christ, more important that his tried, and victorious, and perfect goodness. Others may love Christ for mysterious attributes; I love him for the rectitude of his soul and his life. I love him for that benevolence, which went through Judea, instructing the ignorant, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind. I love him for that universal charity, which comprehended the despised publican, the hated Samaritan, the benighted heathen, and sought to bring a world to God and to happiness. I love him for that gentle, mild, forbearing spirit, which no insult, outrage, injury could overpower; and which desired as earnestly the repentance and happiness of its foes, as the happiness of its friends. I love him for the spirit of magnanimity, constancy, and fearless rectitude, with which, amidst peril and opposition, he devoted himself to the work which God gave him to do. I love him for the wise and enlightened zeal with which he espoused the true, the spiritual interests of mankind, and through which he lived and died to redeem them from every sin, to frame them after his own godlike virtue. I love him, I have said, for his moral excellence; I know nothing else to love. I know nothing so glorious in the Creator or his creatures. This is the greatest gift which God bestows, the greatest to be derived from his Son.

You see why I call you to cherish the love of Christ. This love I do not recommend as a luxury of feeling, as an ecstasy bringing immediate and overflowing joy. I view it in a nobler light. I call you to love Jesus, that you may bring yourselves into contact and communion with perfect virtue, and may become what you love. I know no sincere, enduring good but the moral excellence which shines forth in Jesus Christ. Your wealth, your outward comforts and distinctions, are poor, mean, contemptible, compared with this; and to prefer them to this is self-debasement, self-destruction. May this great truth penetrate our souls; and may we bear witness in our common lives, and especially in trial, in sore temptation, that nothing is so dear to us as the virtue of Christ.

LOVE TO CHRIST.

EPHESIANS vi. 24: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

IN the preceding discourse, I considered the nature and ground of love to Christ. The subject is far from being exhausted. I propose now, after a few remarks on the importance and happiness of this attachment, to call your attention to some errors in relation to it, which prevail in the Christian world.

A virtuous attachment purifies the heart. In loving the excellent, we receive strength to follow them. It is happy for us when a pure affection springs up within us, when friendship knits us with holy and generous minds. It is happy for us when a being of noble sentiments and beneficent life enters our circle, becomes an object of interest to us, and by affectionate intercourse takes a strong hold on our hearts. Not a few can trace the purity and elevation of their minds, to connexion with an individual who has won them by the beauty of his character to the love and practice of righteousness. These views show us the service which Jesus Christ has done to mankind, simply in offering himself before them as an object of attachment and

affection. In inspiring love, he is a benefactor. A man brought to see and feel the godlike virtues of Jesus Christ, who understands his character and is attracted and won by it, has gained, in this sentiment, immense aid in his conflict with evil and in his pursuit of perfection. And he has not only gained aid, but happiness; for a true love is in itself a noble enjoyment. It is the proper delight of a rational and moral being, leaving no bitterness or shame behind, not enervating like the world's pleasures, but giving energy and a lofty consciousness to the mind.

Our nature was framed for virtuous attachments. How strong and interesting are the affections of domestic life, the conjugal, parental, filial ties. But the heart is not confined to our homes, or even to this world. There are more sacred attachments than these, in which instinct has no part, which have their origin in our highest faculties, which are less tumultuous and impassioned than the affections of nature, but more enduring, more capable of growth, more peaceful, far happier, and far nobler. Such is love to Jesus Christ, the most purifying, and the happiest attachment, next to the love of our Creator, which we can form. I wish to aid you in cherishing this sentiment, and for this end I have thought, that in the present discourse it would be well to point out some wrong views, which I think have obstructed it, and obscured its glory.

I apprehend, that, among those Christians who bear the name of Rational, from the importance which they give to the exercise of reason in religion, love to Christ has lost something of its honor, in consequence of its perversion. It has too often been substituted for practical religion. Not a few have professed a very fervent

attachment to Jesus, and have placed great confidence in this feeling, who, at the same time, have seemed to think little of his precepts, and have even spoken of them as unimportant, compared with certain doctrines about his person or nature. Gross errors of this kind have led, as it seems to me, to the opposite extreme. They have particularly encouraged among calm and sober people the idea, that the great object of Christ was to give a religion, to teach great and everlasting truth, and that our concern is with his religion rather than with himself. The great question, as such people say, is, not what Jesus *was*, but what he *revealed*. In this way a distinction has been made between Jesus and his religion; and, whilst some sects have done little but talk of Christ and his person, others have dwelt on the principles he taught, to the neglect, in a measure, of the Divine Teacher. I consider this as an error, to which some of us may be exposed, and which therefore deserves consideration.

Now, I grant, that Jesus Christ came to give a religion, to reveal truth. This is his great office; but I maintain, that this is no reason for overlooking Jesus; for his religion has an intimate and peculiar connexion with himself. It derives authority and illustration from his character. Jesus is his religion embodied, and made visible. The connexion between him and his system is peculiar. It differs altogether from that which ancient philosophers bore to their teachings. An ancient sage wrote a book, and the book is of equal value to us, whether we know its author or not. But there is no such thing as Christianity without Christ. We cannot know it separately from him. It is not a book which Jesus wrote. It is his conversation, his character, his

history, his life, his death, his resurrection. He pervades it throughout. In loving him, we love his religion; and a just interest in this cannot be awakened, but by contemplating it as it shone forth in himself.

Christ's religion, I have said, is very imperfect without himself; and therefore they who would make an abstract of his precepts, and say that it is enough to follow these without thinking of their author, grievously mistake, and rob the system of much of its energy. I mean not to disparage the precepts of Christ, considered in themselves. But their full power is only to be understood and felt, by those who place themselves near the Divine Teacher, who see the celestial fervor of his affection whilst he utters them, who follow his steps from Bethlehem to Calvary, and witness the expression of his precepts in his own life. These come to me almost as new precepts, when I associate them with Jesus. His command to love my enemies, becomes intelligible and bright, when I stand by his cross and hear his prayer for his murderers. I understand what he meant by the self-denial which he taught, when I see him foregoing the comforts of life, and laying down life itself, for the good of others. I learn the true character of that benevolence, by which human nature is perfected, how it unites calmness and earnestness, tenderness and courage, condescension and dignity, feeling and action; this I learn in the life of Jesus as no words could teach me. So I am instructed in the nature of piety by the same model. The command to love God with all my heart, if only written, might have led me into extravagance, enthusiasm, and neglect of common duties; for religious excitement has a peculiar tendency to excess; but in Jesus I see a devotion to God, entire, perfect,

never remitted, yet without the least appearance of passion, as calm and self-possessed as the love which a good mind bears to a parent; and in him I am taught, as words could not teach, how to join supreme regard to my Creator, with active charity and common duties towards my fellow-beings.

And not only the precepts, but the great doctrines of Christianity, are bound up with Jesus, and cannot be truly understood without him. For example, one of the great doctrines of Christianity, perhaps its chief, is the kind interest of God in all his creatures, not only in the good but in the evil; his placable, clement, merciful character; his desire to recover and purify and make for ever happy even those who have stained themselves with the blackest guilt. The true character of God in this respect I see indeed in his providence, I read it in his word, and for every manifestation of it I am grateful. But when I see his spotless and beloved Son, to whom his power was peculiarly delegated, and in whom he peculiarly dwelt, giving singular attention to the most fallen and despised men, casting away all outward pomp that he might mingle familiarly with the poor and neglected; when I see him sitting at table with the publican and the sinner, inviting them to approach him as a friend, suffering the woman whose touch was deemed pollution, to bedew his feet with tears; and when I hear him in the midst of such a concourse saying, "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost,"—I have a conviction of the lenity, benignity, grace, of that God whose representative and chosen minister he was, such as no abstract teaching could have given me. Let me add one more doctrine, that of immortality. I prize every evidence of this

great truth; I look within and without me, for some pledge that I am not to perish in the grave, that this mind, with its thoughts and affections, is to live, and improve, and be perfected, and to find that joy for which it thirsts and which it cannot find on earth. Christ's teaching on this subject is invaluable; but what power does this teaching gain, when I stand by his sepulchre, and see the stone rolled away, and behold the great revealer of immortality, rising in power and triumph, and ascending to the life and happiness he had promised!

Thus Christianity, from beginning to end, is intimately connected with its Divine teacher. It is not an abstract system. The rational Christian who would think of it as such, who, in dwelling on the religion, overlooks its Revealer, is unjust to it. Would he see and feel its power, let him see it warm, living, breathing, acting in the mind, heart, and life of its Founder. Let him love it there. In other words, let him love the character of Jesus, justly viewed, and he will love the religion in the way most fitted to make it the power of God unto salvation.

I have said that love to Christ, when he is justly viewed, that is, when it is an enlightened and rational affection, includes the love of his whole religion; but I beg you to remember that I give this praise only to an enlightened affection; and such is not the most common, nor is it easily acquired. I apprehend that there is no sentiment, which needs greater care in its culture than this. Perhaps, in the present state of the world, no virtue is of more difficult acquisition than a pure and intelligent love towards Jesus. There is undoubtedly much of fervent feeling towards him in the Christian

world. But let me speak plainly. I do it from no uncharitableness. I do it only to warn my fellow Christians. The greater part of this affection to Jesus seems to me of very doubtful worth. In many cases, it is an irregular fervor, which impairs the force and soundness of the mind, and which is substituted for obedience to his precepts, for the virtues which ennoble the soul. Much of what is called love to Christ I certainly do not desire you or myself to possess. I know of no sentiment which needs more to be cleared from error and abuse, and I therefore feel myself bound to show you some of its corruptions.

In the first place, I am persuaded that a love to Christ of quite a low character is often awakened by an injudicious use of his sufferings. I apprehend, that if the affection which many bear to Jesus were analyzed, the chief ingredient in it would be found to be a tenderness awakened by his cross. In certain classes of Christians, it is common for the religious teacher to delineate the bleeding, dying Saviour, and to detail his agonies, until men's natural sympathy is awakened; and when assured that this deep woe was borne for themselves, they almost necessarily yield to the softer feelings of their nature. I mean not to find fault with this sensibility. It is happy for us that we are made to be touched by others' pains. Woe to him, who has no tears for mortal agony. But in this emotion there is no virtue, no moral worth; and we dishonor Jesus, when this is the chief tribute we offer him. I say there is no moral goodness in this feeling. To be affected, overpowered by a crucifixion, is the most natural thing in the world. Who of us, let me ask, whether religious or not, ever went into a Catholic church, and there saw the picture

of Jesus hanging from his cross, his head bending under the weight of exhausting suffering, his hands and feet pierced with nails, and his body stained with his open wounds, and has not been touched by the sight? Suppose that, at this moment, there were lifted up among us a human form, transfixed with a spear, and from which the warm life-blood was dropping in the midst of us. Who would not be deeply moved? and when a preacher, gifted with something of an actor's power, places the cross, as it were, in the midst of a people, is it wonderful that they are softened and subdued? I mean not to censure all appeals of this kind to the human heart. There is something interesting and encouraging in the tear of compassion. There was wisdom in the conduct of the Moravian Missionaries in Greenland, who, finding that the rugged and barbarous natives were utterly insensible to general truth, depicted, with all possible vividness, the streaming blood and dying agonies of Jesus, and thus caught the attention of the savage through his sympathies, whom they could not interest through his reason or his fears. But sensibility thus awakened, is quite a different thing from true, virtuous love to Jesus Christ; and, when viewed and cherished as such, it takes the place of higher affections. I have often been struck by the contrast between the use made of the cross in the pulpit, and the calm, unimpassioned manner in which the sufferings of Jesus are detailed by the Evangelists. These witnesses of Christ's last moments, give you in simple language the particulars of that scene, without one remark, one word of emotion; and if you read the Acts and Epistles, you will not find a single instance, in which the Apostles strove to make a moving picture of his crucifixion. No; they honored Jesus too

much, they felt too deeply the greatness of his character, to be moved as many are by the circumstances of his death. Reverence, admiration, sympathy with his sublime spirit, these swallowed up, in a great measure, sympathy with his sufferings. The cross was to them the last, crowning manifestation of a celestial mind; they felt that it was endured to communicate the same mind to them and the world; and their emotion was a holy joy in this consummate and unconquerable goodness. To be touched by suffering is a light thing. It is not the greatness of Christ's sufferings on the cross which is to move our whole souls, but the greatness of the spirit with which he suffered. There, in death, he proved his entire consecration of himself to the cause of God and mankind. There his love flowed forth towards his friends, his enemies, and the human race. It is moral greatness, it is victorious love, it is the energy of principle, which gives such interest to the cross of Christ. We are to look through the darkness which hung over him, through his wounds and pains, to his unbroken, disinterested, confiding spirit. To approach the cross for the purpose of weeping over a bleeding, dying friend, is to lose the chief influence of the crucifixion. We are to visit the cross, not to indulge a natural softness, but to acquire firmness of spirit, to fortify our minds for hardship and suffering in the cause of duty and of human happiness. To live as Christ lived, to die as Christ died, to give up ourselves as sacrifices to God, to conscience, to whatever good interest we can advance, — these are the lessons written with the blood of Jesus His cross is to inspire us with a calm courage, resolution, and superiority to all temptation. I fear (is my fear groundless?) that a sympathy which enervates rather

than fortifies, is the impression too often received from the crucifixion. The depression with which the Lord's table is too often approached, and too often left, shows, I apprehend, that the chief use of his sufferings is little understood, and that he is loved, not as a glorious sufferer who died to spread his own sublime spirit, but as a man of sorrows, a friend bowed down with the weight of grief.

In the second place, love to Christ of a very defective kind, is cherished in many, by the views which they are accustomed to take of themselves. They form irrational ideas of their own guilt, supposing it to have its origin in their very creation, and then represent to their imaginations an abyss of fire and torment, over which they hang, into which the anger of God is about to precipitate them, and from which nothing but Jesus can rescue them. Not a few, I apprehend, ascribe to Jesus Christ a greater compassion towards them than God is supposed to feel. His heart is tenderer than that of the Universal Parent, and this tenderness is seen in his plucking them by a mighty power from tremendous and infinite pain, from everlasting burnings. Now, that Jesus, under such circumstances should excite the mind strongly, should become the object of a very intense attachment, is almost necessary ; but the affection so excited is of very little worth. Let the universe seem to me wrapped in darkness, let God's throne send forth no light but blasting flashes, let Jesus be the only bright and cheering object to my affrighted and desolate soul, and a tumultuous gratitude will carry me towards him just as irresistibly as natural instinct carries the parent animal to its young. I do and must grieve at the modes commonly used to make Jesus Christ an interesting be-

ing Even the Infinite Father is stripped of his glory for the sake of throwing a lustre round the Son. The condition of man is painted in frightful colors which cast unspeakable dishonor on his Creator, for the sake of magnifying the greatness of Christ's salvation. Man is stripped of all the powers which make him a responsible being, his soul harrowed with terrors, and the future illumined only by the flames which are to consume him, that his deliverer may seem more necessary ; and when the mind, in this state of agitation, in this absence of self-control, is wrought up into a fervor of gratitude to Jesus, it is thought to be sanctified. This selfish, irrational gratitude, is called a virtue. Much of the love given to Jesus, having the origin of which I now speak, seems to me of no moral worth. It is not the soul's free gift, not a sentiment nourished by our own care from a conviction of its purity and nobleness, but an instinctive, ungoverned, selfish feeling. Suppose, my friends, that in a tempestuous night you should find yourselves floating towards a cataract, the roar of which should announce the destruction awaiting you, and that a fellow-being of great energy, should rush through the darkness, and bring you to the shore ; could you help embracing him with gratitude ? And would this emotion imply any change of character ? Would you not feel it towards your deliverer, even should he have acted from mere impulse, and should his general character be grossly defective ? Is not this a necessary working of nature, a fruit of terror changed into joy ? I mean not to condemn it ; I only say it is not virtue. It is a poor tribute to Jesus ; he deserves something far purer and nobler.

The habit of exaggerating the wretchedness of man's condition, for the purpose of rendering Jesus more

necessary, operates very seriously to degrade men's love to Jesus, by accustoming them to ascribe to him a low and commonplace character. I wish this to be weighed. They who represent to themselves the whole human race as sinking by an hereditary corruption into an abyss of flame and perpetual woe, very naturally think of Jesus as a being of overflowing compassion, as impelled by a resistless pity to fly to the relief of these hopeless victims; for this is the emotion that such a sight is fitted to produce. Now this overpowering compassion, called forth by the view of exquisite misery, is a very ordinary virtue; and yet, I apprehend, it is the character ascribed above all others to Jesus. It certainly argues no extraordinary goodness, for it is an almost necessary impulse of nature. Were you, my friends, to see millions and millions of the human race on the edge of a fiery gulf, where ages after ages of torture awaited them, and were the shrieks of millions who had already been plunged into the abyss to pierce your ear, — could you refrain from an overpowering compassion, and would you not willingly endure hours and days of exquisite pain to give these wretched millions release? Is there any man who has not virtue enough for this? I have known men of ordinary character hazard their lives under the impulse of compassion, for the rescue of fellow-beings from infinitely lighter evils than are here supposed. To me it seems, that to paint the misery of human beings in these colors of fire and blood, and to ascribe to Christ the compassion which such misery must awaken, and to make this the chief attribute of his mind, is the very method to take from his character its greatness, and to weaken his claim on our love. I see nothing in Jesus of the overpowering compassion which is often ascribed

to him. His character rarely exhibited strong emotion. It was distinguished by calmness, firmness, and conscious dignity. Jesus had a mind too elevated to be absorbed and borne away by pity, or any other passion. He felt indeed deeply for human suffering and grief; but his chief sympathy was with the Mind, with its sins and moral diseases, and especially with its capacity of improvement and everlasting greatness and glory. He felt himself commissioned to quicken and exalt immortal beings. The thought which kindled and sustained him, was that of an immeasurable virtue to be conferred on the mind, even of the most depraved; a good, the very conception of which implies a lofty character, a good, which as yet has only dawned on his most improved disciples. It is his consecration to this sublime end, which constitutes his glory; and no farther than we understand this, can we yield him the love which his character claims and deserves.

I have endeavoured to show the circumstances which have contributed to depress and degrade men's affections towards Jesus Christ. To me the influence of these causes seems to be great. I know of no feeling more suspicious than the common love to Christ. A true affection to him, indeed, is far from being of easy acquisition. As it is the purest and noblest we can cherish, with the single exception of love to God, so it requires the exercise of our best powers. You all must feel, that an indispensable requisite or preparation for this love is to understand the character of Jesus. But this is no easy thing. It not only demands that we carefully read and study his history; there is another process more important. We must begin in earnest to convert into practice our present imperfect knowledge

of Christ, and to form ourselves upon him as far as he is now discerned. Nothing so much brightens and strengthens the eye of the mind to understand an excellent being, as likeness to him. We never know a great character until something congenial to it has grown up within ourselves. No strength of intellect and no study can enable a man of a selfish and sensual mind to comprehend Jesus. Such a mind is covered with a mist; and just in proportion as it subdues evil within itself, the mist will be scattered, Jesus will rise upon it with a sun-like brightness, and will call forth its most fervent and most enlightened affection.

I close with two remarks. You see, by this discourse, how important to the love of Christ it is, to understand with some clearness the purpose for which he came into the world. The low views prevalent on this subject, seem to me to exert a disastrous influence on the whole character, and particularly on our feelings towards Christ. Christ is supposed to have come to rescue us from an outward hell, to bear the penalties of an outward law. Such benevolence would indeed be worthy of praise; but it is an inferior form of benevolence. The glory of Christ's character, its peculiar brightness, seems to me to consist in his having given himself to accomplish an inward, moral, spiritual deliverance of mankind. He was alive to the worth and greatness of the human soul. He looked through what men were, looked through the thick shades of their idolatry, superstition, and vice, and saw in every human being a spirit of divine origin and godlike faculties, which might be recovered from all its evil, which might become an image and a temple of God. The greatness of Jesus consisted in his de-

voting himself to call forth a mighty power in the human breast, to kindle in us a celestial flame, to breathe into us an inexhaustible hope, and to lay within us the foundation of an immovable peace. His greatness consists in the greatness and sublimity of the action which he communicates to the human soul. This is his chief glory. To avert pain and punishment is a subordinate work. Through neglect of these truths, I apprehend that the brightness of Christ's character is even now much obscured, and perhaps least discerned by some who think they understand him best.

My second remark is, that, if the leading views of this discourse be just, then love to Jesus Christ depends very little on our conception of his rank in the scale of being. On no other topic have Christians contended so earnestly, and yet it is of secondary importance To know Jesus Christ is not to know the precise place he occupies in the universe. It is something more ; it is to look into his mind ; to approach his soul ; to comprehend his spirit ; to see how he thought, and felt, and purposed, and loved ; to understand the workings of that pure and celestial principle within him, through which he came among us as our friend, and lived and died for us. I am persuaded that controversies about Christ's person, have in one way done great injury. They have turned attention from his character. Suppose, that, as Americans, we should employ ourselves in debating the questions, where Washington was born, and from what spot he came when he appeared at the head of our armies ; and that, in the fervor of these contentions, we should overlook the character of his mind, the spirit that moved within him, the virtues which distinguished him, the beamings of a noble, mag-

nanimous soul, — how unprofitably should we be employed! Who is it that understands Washington? Is it he, that can settle his rank in the creation, his early history, his present condition? or he, to whom the soul of that great man is laid open, who comprehends and sympathizes with his generous purposes, who understands the energy with which he espoused the cause of freedom and his country, and who receives through admiration a portion of the same divine energy? So in regard to Jesus, the questions which have been agitated about his rank and nature are of inferior moment. His greatness belonged not to his condition, but to his mind, his spirit, his aim, his disinterestedness, his calm, sublime consecration of himself to the high purpose of God.

My hearers, it is the most interesting event in human history, that such a being as Jesus has entered our world, to accomplish the deliverance of our minds from all evil, to bring them to God, to open heaven within them, and thus to fit them for heaven. It is our greatest privilege that he is brought within our view, offered to our imitation, to our trust, to our love. A sincere and enlightened attachment to him is at once our honor and our happiness, a spring of virtuous action, of firmness in suffering, of immortal hope. But remember, it will not grow up of itself. You must resolve upon it, and cherish it. You must bring Jesus near, as he lives and moves in the Gospel. You should meet him in the institution, which he especially appointed for the commemoration of himself. You should seek, by prayer, God's aid in strengthening your love to the Saviour. You should learn his greatness and beneficence by learning the greatness and destination of the souls which he

came to rescue and bless. In the last place, you should obey his precepts, and through this obedience should purify and invigorate your minds to know and love him more. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

THE FUTURE LIFE.

DISCOURSE

PREACHED

ON EASTER SUNDAY, 1834, AFTER THE DEATH OF AN EXCELLENT AND VERY DEAR FRIEND.

EPHESIANS i. 20: "He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."

THIS day is set apart by the Christian world to the commemoration of Christ's resurrection. Many uses may be made of this event, but it is particularly fitted to confirm the doctrine of another life, and to turn our thoughts, desires, hopes towards another world. I shall employ it to give this direction to our minds.

There is one method in which Christ's resurrection gives aid to our faith in another life, which is not often dwelt on, and which seems to me worthy of attention. Our chief doubts and difficulties in regard to that state, spring chiefly from the senses and the imagination, and not from the reason. The eye, fixed on the lifeless body, on the wan features and the motionless limbs, — and the imagination, following the frame into the dark tomb, and representing to itself the stages of decay

and ruin, are apt to fill and oppress the mind with discouraging and appalling thoughts. The senses can detect in the pale corse not a trace of the activity of that spirit which lately moved it. Death seems to have achieved an entire victory; and when reason and revelation speak of continued and a higher life, the senses and imagination, pointing to the disfigured and mouldering body, obscure by their sad forebodings the light which reason and revelation strive to kindle in the bereaved soul.

Now the resurrection of Christ meets, if I may so say, the senses and imagination on their own ground, contends with them with their own weapons. It shows us the very frame, on which death, in its most humiliating form, had set its seal, and which had been committed in utter hopelessness to the tomb, rising, breathing, moving with new life, and rising not to return again to the earth, but, after a short sojourn, to ascend from the earth to a purer region, and thus to attest man's destination to a higher life. These facts, submitted to the very senses, and almost necessarily kindling the imagination to explore the unseen world, seem to me particularly suited to overcome the main difficulties in the way of Christian faith. Reason is not left to struggle alone with the horrors of the tomb. The assurance that Jesus Christ, who lived on the earth, who died on the cross, and was committed a mutilated, bleeding frame to the receptacle of the dead, rose uninjured, and then exchanged an earthly for a heavenly life, puts to flight the sad auguries, which rise like spectres from the grave, and helps us to conceive, as in our present weakness we could not otherwise conceive, of man's appointed triumph over death.

Such is one of the aids given by the resurrection,

to faith in immortality. Still this faith is lamentably weak in the multitude of men. To multitudes, Heaven is almost a world of fancy. It wants substance. The idea of a world, in which beings exist without these gross bodies, exist as pure spirits, or clothed with refined and spiritual frames, strikes them as a fiction. What cannot be seen or touched, appears unreal. This is mournful, but not wonderful; for how can men, who immerse themselves in the body and its interests, and cultivate no acquaintance with their own souls and spiritual powers, comprehend a higher, spiritual life? There are multitudes who pronounce a man a visionary, who speaks distinctly and joyfully of his future being, and of the triumph of the mind over bodily decay.

This skepticism as to things spiritual and celestial, is as irrational and unphilosophical as it is degrading. We have more evidence that we have souls or spirits, than that we have bodies. We are surer that we think, and feel, and will, than that we have solid and extended limbs and organs. Philosophers have said much to disprove the existence of matter and motion, but they have not tried to disprove the existence of thought; for it is by thought they attempt to set aside the reality of material nature.

Farther, how irrational is it, to imagine that there are no worlds but this, and no higher modes of existence than our own! Who that sends his eye through this immense creation, can doubt that there are orders of beings superior to ourselves, or can see any thing unreasonable in the doctrine, that there are states in which mind exists less circumscribed and clogged by matter than on earth; in other words, that there is a spiritual world? It is childish to make this infant life

of ours the model of existence in all other worlds. The philosopher, especially, who sees a vast chain of beings and an infinite variety of life on this single globe, which is but a point in creation, should be ashamed of that narrowness of mind, which can anticipate nothing nobler in the universe of God than his present mode of being.

How, now, shall the doctrine of a future, higher life, the doctrine both of reason and revelation, be brought to bear more powerfully on the mind, to become more real, and effectual? Various methods might be given. — I shall confine myself to one. This method is, to seek some clearer, more definite conception of the future state. That world seems less real, for want of some distinctness in its features. We should all believe it more firmly if we conceived of it more vividly. It seems unsubstantial, from its vagueness and dimness. I think it right, then, to use the aids of Scripture and Reason in forming to ourselves something like a sketch of the life to come. The Scriptures, indeed, give not many materials for such a delineation, but the few they furnish are invaluable, especially when we add to these the lights thrown over futurity by the knowledge of our own spiritual nature. Every new law of the mind, which we discover, helps us to comprehend its destiny; for its future life must correspond to its great laws and essential powers.

These aids we should employ to give distinctness to the spiritual state; and it is particularly useful so to do, when excellent beings, whom we have known and loved, pass from earth into that world. Nature prompts us to follow them to their new abode, to inquire into their new life, to represent to ourselves their new happiness;

and perhaps the spiritual world never becomes so near and real to us, as when we follow into it dear friends, and sympathize with them in the improvements and enjoyments of that blessed life. Do not say that there is danger here of substituting imagination for Truth. There is no danger if we confine ourselves to the spiritual views of Heaven, given us in the New Testament, and interpret these by the principles and powers of our own souls. To me the subject is too dear and sacred to allow me to indulge myself in dreams. I want reality; I want truth; and this I find in God's word and in the human soul.

When our virtuous friends leave the world, we know not the place where they go. We can turn our eyes to no spot in the universe, and say they are there. Nor is our ignorance here of any moment. It is unimportant what region of space contains them. Whilst we know not to what place they go, we know what is infinitely more interesting, to what beings they go. We know not where Heaven is, but we know Whom it contains, and this knowledge opens us an infinite field for contemplation and delight.

I. Our virtuous friends, at death, go to Jesus Christ. This is taught in the text. "God raised him from the dead, and exalted him to Heaven." The New Testament always speaks of Jesus as existing now in the spiritual world; and Paul tells us that it is the happiness of the holy, when absent from the body, to be present with the Lord. Here is one great fact in regard to futurity. The good, on leaving us here, meet their Saviour; and this view alone assures us of their unutterable happiness. In this world, they had cherished acquaintance with Jesus through the records of the Evangelists. They had

followed him through his eventful life with veneration and love, had treasured in their memories his words, works, and life-giving promises, and, by receiving his spirit, had learned something of the virtues and happiness of a higher world. Now they meet him, they see him. He is no longer a faint object to their mind, obscured by distance and by the mists of sense and the world. He is present to them, and more intimately present than we are to each other. Of this we are sure; for whilst the precise mode of our future existence is unknown, we do know, that spiritual beings in that higher state must approach and commune with each other more and more intimately in proportion to their progress. Those who are newly born into Heaven meet Jesus, and meet from him the kindest welcome. The happiness of the Saviour, in receiving to a higher life a human being who has been redeemed, purified, inspired with immortal goodness by his influence, we can but imperfectly comprehend. You can conceive what would be your feelings, on welcoming to shore your best friend, who had been tossed on a perilous sea; but the raptures of earthly reunion are faint compared with the happiness of Jesus, in receiving the spirit for which he died, and which under his guidance has passed with an improving virtue through a world of sore temptation. We on earth meet after our long separations to suffer as well as enjoy, and soon to part again. Jesus meets those who ascend from earth to Heaven, with the consciousness that their trial is past, their race is run, that death is conquered. With his far-reaching prophetic eye he sees them entering a career of joy and glory never to end. And his benevolent welcome is expressed with a power which belongs only to the utterance of Heaven, and which communicates to

them an immediate, confiding, overflowing joy. You know that on earth we sometimes meet human beings, whose countenances, at the first view, scatter all distrust, and win from us something like the reliance of a long-tried friendship. One smile is enough to let us into their hearts, to reveal to us a goodness on which we may repose. That smile with which Jesus will meet the new-born inhabitant of Heaven, that joyful greeting, that beaming of love from him who bled for us, that tone of welcome, — all these I can faintly conceive, but no language can utter them. The joys of centuries will be crowded into that meeting. This is not fiction. It is truth founded on the essential laws of the mind.

Our friends, when they enter Heaven, meet Jesus Christ, and their intercourse with him will be of the most affectionate and ennobling character. There will be nothing of distance in it. Jesus is indeed sometimes spoken of as reigning in the future world, and sometimes imagination places him on a real and elevated throne. Strange that such conceptions can enter the minds of Christians. Jesus will indeed reign in Heaven, and so he reigned on earth. He reigned in the fishing-boat, from which he taught; in the humble dwelling, where he gathered round him listening and confiding disciples. His reign is not the vulgar dominion of this world. It is the empire of a great, godlike, disinterested being, over minds capable of comprehending and loving him. In Heaven, nothing like what we call government on earth can exist, for government here is founded in human weakness and guilt. The voice of command is never heard among the spirits of the just. Even on earth, the most perfect government is that of a family, where parents employ no tone but that of affectionate counsel,

where filial affection reads its duty in the mild look and finds its law and motive in its own pure impulse. Christ will not be raised on a throne above his followers. On earth he sat at the same table with the publican and sinner. Will he recede from the excellent whom he has fitted for celestial mansions? How minds will communicate with one another in that world, we know not; but we know that our closest embraces are but types of the spiritual nearness which will then be enjoyed; and to this intimacy with Jesus the new-born inhabitant of Heaven is admitted.

But we have not yet exhausted this source of future happiness. The excellent go from earth not only to receive a joyful welcome and assurances of eternal love from the Lord. There is a still higher view. They are brought by this new intercourse to a new comprehension of his mind, and to a new reception of his spirit. It is indeed a happiness to know that we are objects of interest and love to an illustrious being; but it is a greater happiness, to know deeply the sublime and beautiful character of this being, to sympathize with him, to enter into his vast thoughts and pure designs, and to become associated with him in the great ends for which he lives. Even here in our infant and dim state of being, we learn enough of Jesus, of his divine philanthropy triumphant over injuries and agonies, to thrill us with affectionate admiration. But those in Heaven look into that vast, godlike soul, as we have never done. They approach it, as we cannot approach the soul of the most confiding friend; and this nearness to the mind of Jesus awakens in themselves a power of love and virtue, which they little suspected during their earthly being. I trust I speak to those, who, if they have ever been brought

into connexion with a noble human being, have felt, as it were, a new spirit, and almost new capacities of thought and life, expanded within them. We all know, how a man of mighty genius and of heroic feeling, can impart himself to other minds, and raise them for a time to something like his own energy ; and in this we have a faint delineation of the power to be exerted on the minds of those who approach Jesus after death. As nature at this season springs to a new life under the beams of the sun, so will the human soul be warmed and expanded under the influence of Jesus Christ. It will then become truly conscious of the immortal power treasured up in itself. His greatness will not overwhelm it, but will awaken a corresponding grandeur.

Nor is this topic yet exhausted. The good, on approaching Jesus, will not only sympathize with his spirit, but will become joint workers, active, efficient ministers, in accomplishing his great work of spreading virtue and happiness. We must never think of Heaven as a state of inactive contemplation, or of unproductive feeling. Even here on earth, the influence of Christ's character is seen in awakening an active, self-sacrificing goodness. It sends the true disciples to the abodes of the suffering. It binds them by new ties to their race. It gives them a new consciousness of being created for a ministry of beneficence ; and can they, when they approach more nearly this divine Philanthropist, and learn, by a new alliance with him, the fulness of his love, can they fail to consecrate themselves to his work and to kindred labors, with an energy of will unknown on earth ? In truth, our sympathy with Christ could not be perfect, did we not act with him. Nothing so unites beings as coöperation in the same glorious cause,

and to this union with Christ the excellent above are received.

There is another very interesting view of the future state, which seems to me to be a necessary consequence of the connexion to be formed there with Jesus Christ. Those who go there from among us, must retain the deepest interest in this world. Their ties to those they have left are not dissolved, but only refined. On this point, indeed, I want not the evidence of revelation; I want no other evidence than the essential principles and laws of the soul. If the future state is to be an improvement on the present, if intellect is to be invigorated and love expanded there, then memory, the fundamental power of the intellect, must act with new energy on the past, and all the benevolent affections, which have been cherished here, must be quickened into a higher life. To suppose the present state blotted out hereafter from the mind, would be to destroy its use, would cut off all connexion between the two worlds, and would subvert responsibility; for how can retribution be awarded for a forgotten existence? No; we must carry the present with us, whether we enter the world of happiness or woe. The good will indeed form new, holier, stronger ties above; but under the expanding influence of that better world, the human heart will be capacious enough to retain the old whilst it receives the new, to remember its birth-place with tenderness whilst enjoying a maturer and happier being. Did I think of those who are gone, as dying to those they left, I should honor and love them less. The man who forgets his home when he quits it, seems to want the best sensibilities of our nature; and if the good were to forget their brethren on earth in their new abode, were to cease to intercede for them in their

nearer approach to their common Father, could we think of them as improved by the change ?

All this I am compelled to infer from the nature of the human mind. But when I add to this, that the new-born heirs of heaven go to Jesus Christ, the great lover of the human family, who dwelt here, suffered here, who moistened our earth with his tears and blood, who has gone not to break off but to continue and perfect his beneficent labors for mankind, whose mind never for a moment turns from our race, whose interest in the progress of his truth and the salvation of the tempted soul, has been growing more and more intense ever since he left our world, and who has thus bound up our race with his very being, — when I think of all this, I am sure that they cannot forget our world. Could we hear them, I believe they would tell us that they never truly loved the race before ; never before knew, what it is to sympathize with human sorrow, to rejoice in human virtue, to mourn for human guilt. A new fountain of love to man is opened within them. They now see what before dimly gleamed on them, the capacities, the mysteries of a human soul. The significance of that word Immortality is now apprehended, and every being destined to it rises into unutterable importance. They love human nature as never before, and human friends are prized as above all price.

Perhaps it may be asked, whether those born into Heaven, not only remember with interest, but have a present immediate knowledge of those whom they left on earth ? On this point, neither Scripture nor the principles of human nature give us light, and we are of course left to uncertainty. I will only say, that I know nothing to prevent such knowledge. We are indeed

accustomed to think of Heaven as distant; but of this we have no proof. Heaven is the union, the society of spiritual, higher beings. May not these fill the universe, so as to make Heaven everywhere? are such beings probably circumscribed, as we are, by material limits? Milton has said,—

> "Millions of spiritual beings walk the earth
> Both when we wake and when we sleep."

It is possible that the distance of Heaven lies wholly in the veil of flesh, which we now want power to penetrate. A new sense, a new eye, might show the spiritual world compassing us on every side.

But suppose Heaven to be remote. Still we on earth may be visible to its inhabitants; still in an important sense they may be present; for what do we mean by presence? Am I not present to those of you who are beyond the reach of my arm, but whom I distinctly see? And is it at all inconsistent with our knowledge of nature, to suppose that those in Heaven, whatever be their abode, may have spiritual senses, organs, by which they may discern the remote as clearly as we do the near? This little ball of sight can see the planets at the distance of millions of miles, and by the aids of science, can distinguish the inequalities of their surfaces. And it is easy for us to conceive of an organ of vision so sensitive and piercing, that from our earth the inhabitants of those far-rolling worlds might be discerned. Why, then, may not they who have entered a higher state, and are clothed with spiritual frames, survey our earth as distinctly as when it was their abode?

This may be the truth; but if we receive it as such, let us not abuse it. It is liable to abuse. Let us not

think of the departed, as looking on us with earthly, partial affections. They love us more than ever, but with a refined and spiritual love. They have now but one wish for us, which is, that we may fit ourselves to join them in their mansions of benevolence and piety. Their spiritual vision penetrates to our souls. Could we hear their voice, it would not be an utterance of personal attachment, so much as a quickening call to greater effort, to more resolute self-denial, to a wider charity, to a meeker endurance, a more filial obedience of the will of God. Nor must we think of them as appropriated to ourselves. They are breathing now an atmosphere of divine benevolence. They are charged with a higher mission than when they trod the earth. And this thought of the enlargement of their love should enlarge ours, and carry us beyond selfish regards to a benevolence akin to that with which they are inspired.

It is objected, I know, to the view I have given of the connexion of the inhabitants of Heaven with this world, that it is inconsistent with their happiness. It is said, that if they retain their knowledge of this state, they must suffer from the recollection or sight of our sins and woes ; that to enjoy Heaven, they must wean themselves from the earth. This objection is worse than superficial. It is a reproach to Heaven and the good. It supposes, that the happiness of that world is founded in ignorance, that it is the happiness of the blind man, who, were he to open his eye on what exists around him, would be filled with horror. It makes Heaven an Elysium, whose inhabitants perpetuate their joy by shutting themselves up in narrow bounds, and hiding themselves from the pains of their fellow-creatures. But the good, from their very nature, cannot thus be confined. Heaven

would be a prison, did it cut them off from sympathy with the suffering. Their benevolence is too pure, too divine, to shrink from the sight of evil. Let me add, that the objection before us casts reproach on God. It supposes that there are regions of his universe, which must be kept out of sight, which, if seen, would blight the happiness of the virtuous. But this cannot be true. There are no such regions, no secret places of woe which these pure spirits must not penetrate. There is impiety in the thought. In such a universe there could be no Heaven.

Do you tell me that according to these views, suffering must exist in that blessed state? I reply, I do and must regard Heaven as a world of sympathy. Nothing, I believe, has greater power to attract the regards of its benevolent inhabitants, than the misery into which any of their fellow-creatures may have fallen. The suffering which belongs to a virtuous sympathy, I cannot, then, separate from Heaven. But that sympathy, though it has sorrow, is far from being misery. Even in this world, a disinterested compassion, when joined with power to minister to suffering, and with wisdom to comprehend its gracious purposes, is a spirit of peace, and often issues in the purest delight. Unalloyed as it will be in another world, by our present infirmities, and enlightened by comprehensive views of God's perfect government, it will give a charm and loveliness to the sublimer virtues of the blessed, and, like all other forms of excellence, will at length enhance their felicity.

II. You see how much of Heaven is taught us in the single truth, that they who enter it, meet and are united to Jesus Christ. There are other interesting views at

which I can only glance. The departed go not to Jesus only. They go to the great and blessed society which is gathered round him, to the redeemed from all regions of earth, "to the city of the living God, to an innumerable company of angels, to the church of the first-born, to the spirits of the just made perfect." Into what a glorious community do they enter! And how they are received you can easily understand. We are told, there is joy in heaven over the sinner who repenteth; and will not his ascension to the abode of perfect virtue, communicate more fervent happiness? Our friends who leave us for that world, do not find themselves cast among strangers. No desolate feeling springs up of having exchanged their home for a foreign country. The tenderest accents of human friendship never approached in affectionateness the voice of congratulation, which bids them welcome to their new and everlasting abode. In that world, where minds have surer means of revealing themselves than here, the newly arrived immediately see and feel themselves encompassed with virtue and goodness; and through this insight into the congenial spirits which surround them, intimacies stronger than years can cement on earth, may be created in a moment.

It seems to me accordant with all the principles of human nature, to suppose that the departed meet peculiar congratulation from friends who had gone before them to that better world; and especially from all who had in any way given aids to their virtue; from parents who had instilled into them the first lessons of love to God and man; from associates, whose examples had won them to goodness, whose faithful counsels deterred them from sin. The ties created by such benefits must be eternal. The grateful soul must bind itself with peculiar affection to such as guided it to immortality.

In regard to the happiness of the intercourse of the future state, all of you, I trust, can form some apprehensions of it. If we have ever known the enjoyments of friendship, of entire confidence, of coöperation in honorable and successful labors with those we love, we can comprehend something of the felicity of a world, where souls, refined from selfishness, open as the day, thirsting for new truth and virtue, endued with new power of enjoying the beauty and grandeur of the universe, allied in the noblest works of benevolence, and continually discovering new mysteries of the Creator's power and goodness, communicate themselves to one another with the freedom of perfect love. The closest attachments of this life are cold, distant, stranger-like, compared with theirs. How they communicate themselves, by what language or organs, we know not. But this we know, that in the progress of the mind, its power of imparting itself must improve. The eloquence, the thrilling, inspiring tones, in which the good and noble sometimes speak to us on earth, may help us to conceive the expressiveness, harmony, energy of the language in which superior beings reveal themselves above. Of what they converse we can better judge. They who enter that world, meet beings whose recollections extend through ages, who have met together perhaps from various worlds, who have been educated amidst infinite varieties of condition, each of whom has passed through his own discipline and reached his own peculiar form of perfection, and each of whom is a peculiar testimony to the providence of the Universal Father. What treasures of memory, observation, experience, imagery, illustration, must enrich the intercourse of Heaven! One angel's history may be a volume of more various truth,

than all the records of our race. — After all, how little can our present experience help us to understand the intercourse of Heaven, a communion marred by no passion, chilled by no reserve, depressed by no consciousness of sin, trustful as childhood, and overflowing with innocent joy, a communion in which the noblest feelings flow fresh from the heart, in which pure beings give familiar utterance to their divinest inspirations, to the Wonder which perpetually springs up amidst this ever-unfolding and ever-mysterious universe, to the raptures of adoration and pious gratitude, and to the swellings of a sympathy which cannot be confined.

But it would be wrong to imagine that the inhabitants of Heaven only converse. They who reach that world, enter on a state of action, life, effort. We are apt to think of the future world as so happy that none need the aid of others, that effort ceases, that the good have nothing to do, but to enjoy. The truth is, that all action on earth, even the intensest, is but the sport of childhood, compared with the energy and activity of that higher life. It must be so. For what principles are so active as intellect, benevolence, the love of truth, the thirst for perfection, sympathy with the suffering, and devotion to God's purposes; and these are the ever-expanding principles of the future life. It is true, the labors which are now laid on us for food, raiment, outward interests, cease at the grave. But far deeper wants than those of the body are developed in Heaven There it is that the spirit first becomes truly conscious of its capacities; that truth opens before us in its infinity; that the universe is seen to be a boundless sphere for discovery, for science, for the sense of beauty, for beneficence, and for adoration. There new objects to

live for, which reduce to nothingness present interests, are constantly unfolded. We must not think of Heaven as a stationary community. I think of it as a world of stupendous plans and efforts for its own improvement. I think of it, as a society passing through successive stages of developement, virtue, knowledge, power, by the energy of its own members. Celestial genius is always active to explore the great laws of the creation and the everlasting principles of the mind, to disclose the beautiful in the universe, and to discover the means by which every soul may be carried forward. In that world, as in this, there are diversities of intellect, and the highest minds find their happiness and progress in elevating the less improved. There the work of education, which began here, goes on without end; and a diviner philosophy than is taught on earth, reveals the spirit to itself, and awakens it to earnest, joyful effort for its own perfection.

And not only will they who are born into Heaven, enter a society full of life and action for its own developement. Heaven has connexion with other worlds. Its inhabitants are God's messengers through the creation. They have great trusts. In the progress of their endless being, they may have the care of other worlds. But I pause, lest to those unused to such speculations, I seem to exceed the bounds of calm anticipation. What I have spoken seems to me to rest on God's word and the laws of the mind, and these laws are everlasting.

On one more topic I meant to enlarge, but I must forbear. They who are born into Heaven, go not only to Jesus, and an innumerable company of pure beings.

They go to God. They see Him with a new light in all his works. Still more, they see Him, as the Scriptures teach, face to face, that is, by Immediate Communion. These new relations of the ascended spirit to the Universal Father, how near! how tender! how strong! how exalting! But this is too great a subject for the time which remains. And yet it is the chief element of the felicity of Heaven.

The views now given of the future state, should make it an object of deep interest, earnest hope, constant pursuit. Heaven is, in truth, a glorious reality. Its attraction should be felt perpetually. It should overcome the force with which this world draws us to itself. Were there a country on earth uniting all that is beautiful in nature, all that is great in virtue, genius, and the liberal arts, and numbering among its citizens, the most illustrious patriots, poets, philosophers, philanthropists of our age, how eagerly should we cross the ocean to visit it! And how immeasurably greater is the attraction of Heaven! There live the elder brethren of the creation, the sons of the morning, who sang for joy at the creation of our race; there the great and good of all ages and climes; the friends, benefactors, deliverers, ornaments of their race; the patriarch, prophet, apostle, and martyr; the true heroes of public, and still more of private, life; the father, mother, wife, husband, child, who, unrecorded by man, have walked before God in the beauty of love and self-sacrificing virtue. There are all who have built up in our hearts the power of goodness and truth, the writers from whose pages we have received the inspiration of pure and lofty sentiments, the friends whose countenances have

shed light through our dwellings, and peace and strength through our hearts. There they are gathered together, safe from every storm, triumphant over evil; — and they say to us, Come and join us in our everlasting blessedness; Come and bear part in our song of praise; Share our adoration, friendship, progress, and works of love. They say to us, Cherish now in your earthly life, that spirit and virtue of Christ which is the beginning and dawn of Heaven, and we shall soon welcome you, with more than human friendship, to our own immortality. Shall that voice speak to us in vain? Shall our worldliness and unforsaken sins, separate us, by a gulf which cannot be passed, from the society of Heaven?

WAR.

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED JANUARY 25, 1835.

JAMES iv. 1: "Whence come wars and fightings among you?"

I ASK your attention to the subject of public war. I am aware, that to some this topic may seem to have political bearings, which render it unfit for the pulpit; but to me it is eminently a moral and religious subject. In approaching it, political parties and interest vanish from my mind. They are forgotten amidst the numerous miseries and crimes of war. To bring war to an end was one of the purposes of Christ, and his ministers are bound to concur with him in the work. The great difficulty on the present occasion, is, to select some point of view from the vast field which opens before us. After some general remarks, I shall confine myself to a single topic, which at present demands peculiar attention.

Public war is not an evil which stands alone, or has nothing in common with other evils. It belongs, as the text intimates, to a great family. It may be said, that society, through its whole extent, is deformed by war.

Even in families we see jarring interests and passions, invasions of rights, resistance of authority, violence, force; and in common life, how continually do we see men struggling with one another for property or distinction, injuring one another in word or deed, exasperated against one another by jealousies, neglects, and mutual reproach. All this is essentially war, but war restrained, hemmed in, disarmed by the opinions and institutions of society. To limit its ravages, to guard reputation, property, and life, society has instituted government, erected the tribunal of justice, clothed the legislator with the power of enacting equal laws, put the sword into the hand of the magistrate, and pledged its whole force to his support. Human wisdom has been manifested in nothing more conspicuously than in civil institutions for repressing war, retaliation, and passionate resort to force, among the citizens of the same state. But here it has stopped. Government, which is ever at work to restrain the citizen at home, often lets him loose, and arms him with fire and sword against other communities, sends out hosts for desolation and slaughter, and concentrates the whole energies of a people in the work of spreading misery and death. Government, the peace-officer at home, breathes war abroad, organizes it into a science, reduces it to a system, makes it a trade, and applauds it as if it were the most honorable work of nations. Strange that the wisdom which has so successfully put down the wars of individuals, has never been inspired and emboldened to engage in the task of bringing to an end the more gigantic crimes and miseries of public war. But this universal pacification, until of late, has hardly been thought of; and in reading history we are almost tempted to believe, that the chief end of govern-

ment in promoting internal quiet, has been to accumulate greater resources for foreign hostilities. Bloodshed is the staple of history, and men have been butchered and countries ravaged, as if the human frame had been constructed with such exquisite skill only to be mangled, and the earth covered with fertility only to attract the spoiler.

These reflections, however, it is not my intention to pursue. The miseries of war are not my present subject. One remark will be sufficient to place them in their true light. What gives these miseries preëminence among human woes, — what should compel us to look on them with peculiar horror, — is, not their awful amount, but their origin, their source. They are miseries inflicted by man on man. They spring from depravity of will. They bear the impress of cruelty, of hardness of heart. The distorted features, writhing frames, and shrieks of the wounded and dying, — these are not the chief horrors of war: they sink into unimportance compared with the infernal passions which work this woe. Death is a light evil when not joined with crime. Had the countless millions destroyed by war, been swallowed up by floods or yawning earthquakes, we should look back awe-struck, but submissive, on the mysterious providence which had thus fulfilled the mortal sentence originally passed on the human race. But that man, born of woman, bound by ties of brotherhood to man, and commanded by an inward law and the voice of God to love and do good, should, through selfishness, pride, revenge, inflict these agonies, shed these torrents of human blood, — here is an evil which combines with exquisite suffering fiendish guilt. All other evils fade before it.

Such are the dark features of war. I have spoken of them strongly, because humanity and religion demand from us all a new and sterner tone on this master evil. But it is due to human nature to observe, that whilst war is, in the main, the offspring and riot of the worst passions, better principles often mix with it and throw a veil over its deformity. Nations fight not merely for revenge or booty. Glory is often the stirring word; and glory, though often misinterpreted and madly pursued by crime, is still an impulse of great minds, and shows a nature made to burn with high thoughts, and to pour itself forth in noble deeds. Many have girded themselves for battle from pure motives; and, as if to teach us that unmingled evil cannot exist in God's creation, the most ferocious conflicts have been brightened by examples of magnanimous and patriotic virtue. In almost all wars, there is some infusion of enthusiasm; and in all enthusiasm, there is a generous element.

Still war is made up essentially of crime and misery, and to abolish it is one great purpose of Christianity, and should be the earnest labor of philanthropy; nor is this enterprise to be scoffed at as hopeless. The tendencies of civilization are decidedly towards peace. The influences of progressive knowledge, refinement, arts, and national wealth, are pacific. The old motives for war are losing power. Conquest, which once maddened nations, hardly enters now into the calculation of statesmen. The disastrous and disgraceful termination of the last career of conquest which the world has known, is reading a lesson not soon to be forgotten. It is now thoroughly understood, that the developement of a nation's resources in peace is the only road to prosperity; that even successful war makes a people poor,

crushing them with taxes and crippling their progress in industry and useful arts. We have another pacific influence at the present moment, in the increasing intelligence of the middle and poorer classes of society, who, in proportion as they learn their interests and rights, are unwilling to be used as materials of war, to suffer and bleed in serving the passions and glory of a privileged few. Again; science, commerce, religion, foreign travel, new facilities of intercourse, new exchanges of literature, new friendships, new interests, are overcoming the old antipathies of nations, and are silently spreading the sentiment of human brotherhood, and the conviction that the welfare of each is the happiness of all. Once more; public opinion is continually gaining strength in the civilized and Christian world; and to this tribunal all states must in a measure bow. Here are pacific influences. Here are encouragements to labor in the cause of peace.

At the present day, one of the chief incitements to war is to be found in false ideas of honor. Military prowess and military success are thought to shed peculiar glory on a people; and many, who are too wise to be intoxicated with these childish delusions, still imagine that the honor of a nation consists peculiarly in the spirit which repels injury, in sensibility to wrongs, and is therefore peculiarly committed to the keeping of the sword. These opinions I shall now examine, beginning with the glory attached to military achievements.

That the idea of glory should be associated strongly with military exploits, ought not to be wondered at. From the earliest ages, ambitious sovereigns and states have sought to spread the military spirit, by loading it with rewards. Badges, ornaments, distinctions, the most

flattering and intoxicating, have been the prizes of war. The aristocracy of Europe, which commenced in barbarous ages, was founded on military talent and success; and the chief education of the young noble, was for a long time little more than a training for battle, — hence the strong connexion between war and honor. All past ages have bequeathed us this prejudice, and the structure of society has given it a fearful force. Let us consider it with some particularity.

The idea of honor is associated with war. But to whom does the honor belong? If to any, certainly not to the mass of the people, but to those who are particularly engaged in it. The mass of a people, who stay at home, and hire others to fight, — who sleep in their warm beds, and hire others to sleep on the cold and damp earth, — who sit at their well-spread board, and hire others to take the chance of starving, who nurse the slightest hurt in their own bodies, and hire others to expose themselves to mortal wounds and to linger in comfortless hospitals; — certainly this mass reap little honor from war; the honor belongs to those immediately engaged in it. Let me ask, then, what is the chief business of war? It is to destroy human life; to mangle the limbs; to gash and hew the body; to plunge the sword into the heart of a fellow-creature; to strew the earth with bleeding frames, and to trample them under foot with horses' hoofs. It is to batter down and burn cities; to turn fruitful fields into deserts; to level the cottage of the peasant and the magnificent abode of opulence; to scourge nations with famine; to multiply widows and orphans. Are these honorable deeds? Were you called to name exploits worthy of demons, would you not naturally select such as these? Grant

that a necessity for them may exist; it is a dreadful necessity, such as a good man must recoil from with instinctive horror; and though it may exempt them from guilt, it cannot turn them into glory. We have thought that it was honorable to heal, to save, to mitigate pain, to snatch the sick and sinking from the jaws of death. We have placed among the revered benefactors of the human race, the discoverers of arts which alleviate human sufferings, which prolong, comfort, adorn, and cheer human life; and if these arts be honorable, where is the glory of multiplying and aggravating tortures and death?

It will be replied, that the honorableness of war consists not in the business which it performs, but in the motives from which it springs, and in the qualities which it indicates. It will be asked, Is it not honorable to serve one's country, and to expose one's life in its cause? Yes, our country deserves love and service; and let her faithful friends, her loyal sons, who under the guidance of duty and disinterested zeal, have poured out their blood in her cause, live in the hearts of a grateful posterity. But who does not know, that this moral heroism is a very different thing from the common military spirit? Who is so simple as to believe, that this all-sacrificing patriotism of principle is the motive which fills the ranks of war, and leads men to adopt the profession of arms? Does this sentiment reign in the common soldier, who enlists because driven from all other modes of support, and hires himself to be shot at for a few cents a-day? Or does it reign in the officer, who, for pay and promotion, from the sense of reputation, or dread of disgrace, meets the foe with a fearless front? There is, indeed, a vulgar patriotism nourished by war; I mean that which burns to humble

other nations, and to purchase for our own the exultation of triumph and superior force. But as for true patriotism, which has its root in benevolence, and which desires the real and enduring happiness of our country, nothing is more adverse to it than war, and no class of men have less of it than those engaged in war. Perhaps in no class is the passion for display and distinction so strong; and in accordance with this infirmity, they are apt to regard as the highest interest of the state, a career of conquests, which makes a show and dazzles the multitude, however desolating or unjust in regard to foreign nations, or however blighting to the prosperity of their own.

The motives which generally lead to the choice of a military life, strip it of all claim to peculiar honor. There are employments, which from their peculiar character, should be undertaken only from high motives. This is peculiarly the case with the profession of arms Its work is bloodshed, destruction, the infliction of the most dreaded evils, not only on wrong-doers, oppressors, usurpers, but on the innocent, weak, defenceless. From this task humanity recoils, and nothing should reconcile us to it but the solemn conviction of duty to God, to our country, to mankind. The man who undertakes this work solely or chiefly to earn money or an epaulette, commits, however unconsciously, a great wrong. Let it be conceded, that he who engages in military life, is bound, as in other professions, to insure from his employers the means of support, and that he may innocently seek the honor which is awarded to faithful and successful service. Still, from the peculiar character of the profession, from the solemnity and terribleness of its agency, no man can engage in it in-

nocently or honorably, who does not deplore its necessity, and does not adopt it from generous motives, from the power of moral and public considerations. That these are not the motives which now fill armies, is too notorious to need proof. How common is it for military men to desire war, as giving rich prizes and as advancing them in their profession. They are willing to slaughter their fellow-creatures for money and distinction; — and is the profession of such men peculiarly glorious? I am not prepared to deny that human life may sometimes be justly taken; but it ought to be taken under the solemn conviction of duty and for great public ends. To destroy our fellow-creatures for profit or promotion, is to incur a guilt from which most men would shrink, could it be brought distinctly before their minds. That there may be soldiers of principle, men who abhor the thought of shedding human blood, and who consent to the painful office only because it seems to them imposed by their country and the best interests of mankind, is freely granted. Such men spring up especially in periods of revolution, when the liberties of a nation are at stake. But that this is not the spirit of the military profession, you know. That men generally enter this profession from selfish motives, that they hire themselves to kill for personal remuneration, you know. That they are ready to slay a fellow-creature, from inducements not a whit more disinterested than those which lead other men to fell an ox or crush a pernicious insect, you know; and, of consequence, the profession has no peculiar title to respect. It is particularly degraded by the offer of prize-money. The power of this inducement is well understood. But is it honorable to kill a fellow-creature for a share of his spoils? A

nation which offers prize-money, is chargeable with the crime of tainting the mind of the soldier. It offers him a demoralizing motive to the destruction of his fellow-creatures. It saps high principle in the minds of those who are susceptible of generous impulses. It establishes the most inhuman method of getting rich which civilized men can pursue. I know that society views this subject differently, and more guilt should be attached to society than to the soldier; but still the character of the profession remains degraded by the motives which most commonly actuate its members; and war, as now carried on, is certainly among the last vocations to be called honorable.

Let not these remarks be misconstrued. I mean not to deny to military men equal virtue with other classes of society. All classes are alike culpable in regard to war, and the burden presses too heavily on all, to allow any to take up reproaches against others. Society has not only established and exalted the military profession, but studiously allures men into it by bribes of vanity, cupidity, and ambition. They who adopt it, have on their side the suffrage of past ages, the sanction of opinion and law, and the applauding voice of nations; so that justice commands us to acquit them of peculiar deviations from duty, or of falling below society in moral worth or private virtue.

Much of the glare thrown over the military profession, is to be ascribed to the false estimate of courage, which prevails through the Christian world. Men are dazzled by this quality. On no point is popular opinion more perverted and more hostile to Christianity, and to this point I would therefore solicit particular attention. The truth is, that the delusion on this subject has

come down to us from remote ages, and has been from the beginning a chief element of the European character. Our northern ancestors, who overwhelmed the Roman empire, were fanatical to the last degree in respect to military courage. They made it the first of virtues. One of the chief articles of their creed was, that a man dying on the field of battle, was transported at once to the hall of their god Odin, a terrible paradise, where he was to quaff for ever delicious draughts from the skulls of his enemies. So rooted was this fanaticism, that it was thought a calamity to die of disease or old age; and death by violence, even if inflicted by their own hands, was thought more honorable than to expire by the slow, inglorious processes of nature. This spirit, aided by other causes, broke out at length into chivalry, the strangest mixture of good and evil, of mercy and cruelty, of insanity and generous sentiment, to be found in human history. This whole institution breathed an extravagant estimation of courage. To be without fear was the first attribute of a good knight. Danger was thirsted for, when it might innocently be shunned. Life was sported with wantonly. Amusements full of peril, exposing even to mortal wounds, were pursued with passionate eagerness. The path to honor lay through rash adventures, the chief merit of which was the scorn of suffering and of death which they expressed. This fanaticism has yielded in a measure to good sense, and still more to the spirit of Christianity. But still it is rife; and not a few imagine fearless courage to be the height of glory.

That courage is of no worth, I have no disposition to affirm. It ought to be prized, sought, cherished. Though not of itself virtuous, it is an important aid to

virtue. It gives us the command of our faculties when needed most. It converts the dangers which palsy the weak, into springs of energy. Its firm look often awes the injurious, and silences insult. All great enterprises demand it, and without it virtue cannot rise into magnanimity. Whilst it leaves us exposed to many vices, it saves us from one class peculiarly ignominious, — from the servility, deceit, and base compliance, which belong to fear. It is accompanied too with an animated consciousness of power, which is one of the high enjoyments of life. We are bound to cherish it as the safeguard of happiness and rectitude ; and when so cherished it takes rank among the virtues.

Still, courage considered in itself, or without reference to its origin and motives, and regarded in its common manifestations, is not virtue, is not moral excellence ; and the disposition to exalt it above the spirit of Christianity, is one of the most ruinous delusions which have been transmitted to us from barbarous times. In most men, courage has its origin in a happy organization of the body. It belongs to the nerves rather than the character. In some, it is an instinct bordering on rashness. In one man, it springs from strong passions obscuring the idea of danger. In another, from the want of imagination or from the incapacity of bringing future evils near. The courage of the uneducated may often be traced to stupidity ; to the absence of thought and sensibility. Many are courageous from the dread of the infamy absurdly attached to cowardice. One terror expels another. A bullet is less formidable than a sneer. To show the moral worthlessness of mere courage, of contempt of bodily suffering and pain, one consideration is sufficient ; — the most abandoned have possessed it

in perfection. The villain often hardens into the thorough hero, if courage and heroism be one. The more complete his success in searing conscience and defying God, the more dauntless his daring. Long-continued vice and exposure naturally generate contempt of life and a reckless encounter of peril. Courage, considered in itself or without reference to its causes, is no virtue and deserves no esteem. It is found in the best and the worst, and is to be judged according to the qualities from which it springs and with which it is conjoined. There is in truth a virtuous, glorious courage; but it happens to be found least in those who are most admired for bravery. It is the courage of principle, which dares to do right in the face of scorn, which puts to hazard reputation, rank, the prospects of advancement, the sympathy of friends, the admiration of the world, rather than violate a conviction of duty. It is the courage of benevolence and piety, which counts not life dear in withstanding error, superstition, vice, oppression, injustice, and the mightiest foes of human improvement and happiness. It is moral energy, that force of will in adopting duty, over which menace and suffering have no power. It is the courage of a soul, which reverences itself too much to be greatly moved about what befalls the body; which thirsts so intensely for a pure inward life, that it can yield up the animal life without fear; in which the idea of moral, spiritual, celestial good has been unfolded so brightly as to obscure all worldly interests; which aspires after immortality, and therefore heeds little the pains or pleasures of a day; which has so concentred its whole power and life in the love of godlike virtue, that it even finds a joy in the perils and sufferings by which its loyalty to God and

virtue may be approved. This courage may be called the perfection of humanity, for it is the exercise, result, and expression of the highest attributes of our nature. Need I tell you, that this courage has hardly any thing in common with what generally bears the name, and has been lauded by the crowd to the skies? Can any man, not wholly blinded to moral distinctions, compare or confound with this divine energy, the bravery derived from constitution, nourished by ambition, and blazing out in resentment, which forms the glory of military men and of men of the world? The courage of military and ordinary life, instead of resting on high and unchangeable principles, finds its chief motive in the opinions of the world, and its chief reward in vulgar praise. Superior to bodily pain, it crouches before censure, and dares not face the scorn which faithfulness to God and unpopular duty must often incur. It wears the appearance of energy, because it conquers one strong passion, fear; but the other passions it leaves unmastered, and thus differs essentially from moral strength or greatness, which consists is subjecting all appetites and desires to a pure and high standard of rectitude. Brilliant courage, as it is called, so far from being a principle of universal self-control, is often joined with degrading pleasures, with a lawless spirit, with general licentiousness of manners, with a hardihood which defies God as well as man, and which, not satisfied with scorning death, contemns the judgment that is to follow. So wanting in moral worth is the bravery which has so long been praised, sung, courted, adored. It is time that it should be understood. It is time that the old, barbarous, indiscriminate worship of mere courage should give place to a wise moral judgment. This fanaticism

has done much to rob Christianity of its due honor. Men, who give their sympathies and homage to the fiery and destructive valor of the soldier, will see little attraction in the mild and peaceful spirit of Jesus. His unconquerable forbearance, the most genuine and touching expression of his divine philanthropy, may even seem to them a weakness. We read of those who, surrounding the cross, derided the meek sufferer. They did it in their ignorance. More guilty, more insensible are those, who, living under the light of Christianity, and yielding it their assent, do not see in that cross a glory which pours contempt on the warrior. Will this delusion never cease? Will men never learn to reverence disinterested love? Shall the desolations and woes of ages bear their testimony in vain against the false glory which has so long dazzled the world? Shall Christ, shall moral perfection, shall the spirit of heaven, shall God manifest in his Son, be for ever insulted by the worship paid to the spirit of savage hordes? Shall the cross ostentatiously worn on the breast, never come to the heart, a touching emblem and teacher of all-suffering love?—I do not ask these questions in despair. Whilst we lament the limited triumphs of Christianity over false notions of honor, we see and ought to recognise its progress. War is not now the only or chief path to glory. The greatest names are not now written in blood. The purest fame is the meed of genius, philosophy, philanthropy, and piety, devoting themselves to the best interests of humanity. The passion for military glory is no longer, as once, able of itself to precipitate nations into war. In all this let us rejoice.

In the preceding remarks, I aimed to show that the glory awarded to military prowess and success, is un-

founded, — to show the deceitfulness of the glare which seduces many into the admiration of war. I proceed to another topic, which is necessary to give us a full understanding of the pernicious influence exerted by the idea of honor in exciting nations to hostility. There are many persons who have little admiration of warlike achievements, and are generally inclined to peace, but who still imagine that the honor of a nation consists peculiarly in quickness to feel and repel injury, and who, consequently, when their country has been wronged, are too prone to rush into war. Perhaps its interests have been slightly touched. Perhaps its well-being imperiously demands continued peace. Still its honor is said to call for reparation, and no sacrifice is thought too costly to satisfy the claim. That rational honor should be dear, and guarded with jealous care, no man will deny; but in proportion as we exalt it, we should be anxious to know precisely what it means, lest we set up for our worship a false, unjust, merciless deity, and instead of glory shall reap shame. I ask, then, in what does the honor of a nation consist? What are its chief elements or constituents? The common views of it are narrow and low. Every people should study it; and in proportion as we understand it, we shall learn that it has no tendency to precipitate nations into war. What, I ask again, is this national honor, from which no sacrifice must be withheld?

The first element of a nation's honor is undoubtedly justice. A people, to deserve respect, must lay down the maxim, as the foundation of its intercourse with other communities, that justice, — a strict regard to the rights of other states, — shall take rank of its interests. A nation without reverence for right, can never plead

in defence of a war, that this is needed to maintain its honor, for it has no honor to maintain. It bears a brand of infamy, which oceans of human blood cannot wash away. With these views, we cannot be too much shocked by the language of a chief magistrate recently addressed to a legislative body in this country.

"No community of men," he says, "in any age or nation, under any dispensation, political or religious, has been governed by justice in its negotiations or conflicts with other states. It is not justice and magnanimity, but interest and ambition, dignified under the name of State policy, that has governed, and ever will govern, masses of men acting as political communities. Individuals may be actuated by a sense of justice; but what citizen in any country would venture to contend for justice to a foreign and rival community, in opposition to the prevailing policy of his state, without forfeiting the character of a patriot?"

Now, if this be true of our country, and to our own country it was applied, then, I say, we have no honor to fight for. A people systematically sacrificing justice to its interests, is essentially a band of robbers, and receives but the just punishment of its profligacy in the assaults of other nations. But it is not true that nations are so dead to moral principles. The voice of justice is not always drowned by the importunities of interest; nor ought we, as citizens, to acquiesce in an injurious act, on the part of our rulers, towards other states, as if it were a matter of course, a necessary working of human selfishness. It ought to be reprobated as indignantly as the wrongs of private men. A people strictly just has an honor independent of opinion, and to which opinion must pay homage. Its glory is purer and more

enduring than that of a thousand victories. Let not him who prefers for his country the renown of military spirit and success to that of justice, talk of his zeal for its honor. He does not know the meaning of the word. He belongs to a barbarous age, and desires for his country no higher praise than has been gained by many a savage horde.

The next great element of a nation's honor is a spirit of philanthropy. A people ought to regard itself as a member of the human family, and as bound to bear part in the work of human improvement and happiness. The obligation of benevolence, belonging to men as individuals, belongs to them in their associated capacities. We have indeed no right to form an association of whatever kind, which severs us from the human race. I care not though men of loose principles scoff at the idea of a nation respecting the claims of humanity. Duty is eternal, and too high for human mockery; and this duty in particular, so far from being a dream, has been reduced to practice. Our own country, in framing its first treaties, proposed to insert an article prohibiting privateering; and this it did in the spirit of humanity to diminish the crimes and miseries of war. England, from philanthropy, abolished the slave trade and slavery. No nation stands alone; and each is bound to consecrate its influence to the promotion of equitable, pacific, and beneficent relations among all countries, and to the diffusion of more liberal principles of intercourse and national law. This country is intrusted by God with a mission for humanity. Its office is to commend to all nations free institutions, as the sources of public prosperity and personal dignity; and I trust we desire to earn the thanks and honor of nations by fidelity

to our trust. A people reckless of the interest of the world, and profligately selfish in its policy, incurs far deeper disgrace than by submission to wrongs; and whenever it is precipitated into war by its cupidity, its very victories become monuments of its guilt, and deserve the execration of present and coming times.

I now come to another essential element of a nation's honor; and that is, the existence of institutions which tend, and are designed, to elevate all classes of its citizens. As it is the improved character of a people which alone gives it an honorable place in the world, its dignity is to be measured chiefly by the extent and efficiency of its provisions and establishments for national improvement, — for spreading education far and wide, — for purifying morals and refining manners, — for enlightening the ignorant and succouring the miserable, — for building up intellectual and moral power, and breathing the spirit of true religion. The degree of aid given to the individual in every condition, for unfolding his best powers, determines the rank of a nation. Mere wealth adds nothing to a people's glory; it is the nation's soul which constitutes its greatness. Nor is it enough for a country to possess a select class of educated, cultivated men; for the nation consists of the many, not the few; and where the mass are sunk in ignorance and sensuality; there you see a degraded community, even though an aristocracy of science be lodged in its bosom. It is the moral and intellectual progress of the people, to which the patriot should devote himself as the only dignity and safeguard of the state. How needed this truth! In all ages, nations have imagined that they were glorifying themselves by triumphing over foreign foes, whilst at home they have been denied every ennobling

institution; have been trodden under foot by tyranny, defrauded of the most sacred rights of humanity, enslaved by superstition, buried in ignorance, and cut off from all the means of rising to the dignity of men. They have thought that they were exalting themselves, in fighting for the very despots who ground them in the dust. Such has been the common notion of national honor; nor is it yet effaced. How many among ourselves are unable to stifle their zeal for our honor as a people, who never spent a thought on the institutions and improvements which ennoble a community, and whose character and examples degrade and taint their country, as far as their influence extends?

I have now given you the chief elements of national honor; and a people cherishing these can hardly be compelled to resort to war. I shall be told, however, that an enlightened and just people though less exposed to hostilities, may still be wronged, insulted, and endangered; and I shall be asked, if in such a case its honor do not require it to repel injury, —if submission be not disgrace? I answer, that a nation which submits to wrong from timidity, or a sorbid love of ease or gain, forfeits its claim to respect. A faint-hearted, self-indulgent people, cowering under menace, shrinking from peril, and willing to buy repose by tribute or servile concession, deserves the chains which it cannot escape. But to bear much and long from a principle of humanity, from reverence for the law of love, is noble; and nothing but moral blindness and degradation induce men to see higher glory in impatience of injury and quickness to resent.

Still I may be asked, whether a people, however forbearing, may not sometimes owe it to its own dignity

and safety to engage in war? I answer, yes. When the spirit of justice, humanity, and forbearance, instead of spreading peace, provokes fresh outrage, this outrage must be met and repressed by force. I know that many sincere Christians oppose to this doctrine the precept of Christ, "Resist not evil." But Christianity is wronged and its truth exposed to strong objections, when these and the like precepts are literally construed. The whole legislation of Christ is intended to teach us the spirit from which we should act, not to lay down rules for outward conduct. The precept, "Resist not evil," if practised to the letter, would annihilate all government in the family and the state; for it is the great work of government to resist evil passions and evil deeds. It is indeed our duty, as Christians, to love our worst enemy, and to desire his true good; but we are to love not only our enemy, but our families, friends, and country, and to take a wise care of our own rights and happiness; and when we abandon to the violence of a wrong-doer these fellow-beings, and these rights, commended by God to our love and care, we are plainly wanting in that expanded benevolence which Christianity demands. A nation, then, may owe it to its welfare and dignity to engage in war; and its honor demands that it should meet the trial with invincible resolution. It ought, at such a moment, to dismiss all fear, except the fear of its own passions, — the fear of the crimes to which the exasperations and sore temptations of public hostilities expose a state.

I have admitted that a nation's honor may require its citizens to engage in war; but it requires them to engage in it wisely, — with a full consciousness of rectitude and with unfeigned sorrow. On no other conditions

does war comport with national dignity; and these deserve a moment's attention. A people must engage in war wisely; for rashness is dishonorable, especially in so solemn and tremendous a concern. A nation must propose a wise end in war; and this remark is the more important, because the end or object which, according to common speech, a people is bound by its honor to propose, is generally disowned by wisdom. How common it is to hear, that the honor of a nation requires it to seek redress of grievances,—reparation of injuries. Now, as a general rule, war does not and cannot repair injuries. Instead of securing compensation for past evils, it almost always multiplies them. As a general rule, a nation loses incomparably more by war than it has previously lost by the wrong-doer. Suppose, for example, a people to have been spoiled by another state of "five millions of dollars." To recover this by war, it must expend fifty or a hundred millions more, and will, almost certainly, come forth from the contest burdened with debt. Nor is this all. It loses more than wealth. It loses many lives. Now, life and property are not to be balanced against each other. If a nation, by slaying a single innocent man, could possess itself of the wealth of worlds, it would have no right to destroy him for that cause alone. A human being cannot be valued by silver and gold; and, of consequence, a nation can never be authorized to sacrifice or expose thousands of lives, for the mere recovery of property of which it has been spoiled. To secure compensation for the past, is very seldom a sufficient object for war. The true end is, security for the future. An injury inflicted by one nation on another, may manifest a lawless, hostile spirit, from which, if unresisted, future and increasing outrages are

to be feared, which would embolden other communities in wrong-doing, and against which neither property, nor life, nor liberty, would be secure. To protect a state from this spirit of violence and unprincipled aggression, is the duty of rulers; and protection may be found only in war. Here is the legitimate occasion and the true end of an appeal to arms. Let me ask you to apply this rule of wisdom to a case, the bearings of which will be easily seen. Suppose, then, an injury to have been inflicted on us by a foreign nation a quarter of a century ago. Suppose it to have been inflicted by a government which has fallen through its lawlessness, and which can never be restored. Suppose this injury to have been followed, during this long period, by not one hostile act, and not one sign of a hostile spirit. Suppose a disposition to repair it to be expressed by the head of the new government of the injurious nation; and suppose further, that our long endurance has not exposed us to a single insult from any other power since the general pacification of Europe. Under these circumstances, can it be pretended, with any show of reason, that threatened wrong, or that future security, requires us to bring upon ourselves and the other nation the horrors and miseries of war? Does not wisdom join with humanity in reprobating such a conflict?

I have said that the honor of a nation requires it to engage in a war for a wise end. I add, as a more important rule, that its dignity demands of it to engage in no conflict without a full consciousness of rectitude. It must not appeal to arms for doubtful rights. It must not think it enough to establish a probable claim. The true principle for a nation, as for an individual, is, that it will suffer rather than do wrong. It should prefer being

injured to the hazard of doing injury. To secure to itself the full consciousness of rectitude, a nation should always desire to refer its disputes to an impartial umpire. It cannot too much distrust its own judgment in its own cause. That same selfish partiality which blinds the individual to the claims of a rival or foe, and which has compelled society to substitute public and disinterested tribunals for private war, disqualifies nations, more or less, to determine their own rights, and should lead them to seek a more dispassionate decision. The great idea which should rise to the mind of a country on meditating war, is rectitude. In declaring war, it should listen only to the voice of duty. To resolve on the destruction of our fellow-creatures without a command from conscience, — a commission from God, — is to bring on a people a load of infamy and crime. A nation, in declaring war, should be lifted above its passions by the fearfulness and solemnity of the act. It should appeal with unfeigned confidence to Heaven and earth for its uprightness of purpose. It should go forth as the champion of truth and justice, as the minister of God, to vindicate and sustain that great moral and national law, without which life has no security, and social improvements no defence. It should be inspired with invincible courage, not by its passions, but by the dignity and holiness of its cause. Nothing in the whole compass of legislation is so solemn as a declaration of war. By nothing do a people incur such tremendous responsibility. Unless justly waged, war involves a people in the guilt of murder. The state which, without the command of justice and God, sends out fleets and armies to slaughter fellow-creatures, must answer for the blood it sheds, as truly as the assassin for the death of his victim. Oh, how loudly does the

voice of blood cry to Heaven from the field of battle. Undoubtedly, the men whose names have come down to us with the loudest shouts of ages, stand now before the tribunal of eternal justice condemned as murderers; and the victories which have been thought to encircle a nation with glory, have fixed the same brand on multitudes in the sight of the final and Almighty Judge. How essential is it to a nation's honor that it should engage in war with a full conviction of rectitude!

But there is one more condition of an honorable war. A nation should engage in it with unfeigned sorrow. It should beseech the throne of grace with earnest supplication, that the dreadful office of destroying fellow-beings may not be imposed on it. War concentrates all the varieties of human misery, and a nation which can inflict these without sorrow, contracts deeper infamy than from cowardice. It is essentially barbarous; and will be looked back upon by more enlightened and Christian ages, with the horror with which we recall the atrocities of savage tribes. Let it be remembered that the calamities of war, its slaughter, famine, and desolation, instead of being confined to its criminal authors, fall chiefly on multitudes who have had no share in provoking and no voice in proclaiming it; and let not a nation talk of its honor, which has no sympathy with these woes, which is steeled to the most terrible sufferings of humanity.

I have now spoken, my friends, of the sentiments with which war should be regarded. Is it so regarded? When recently the suggestion of war was thrown out to this people, what reception did it meet? Was it viewed at once in the light in which a Christian nation should immediately and most earnestly consider it? Was it received as a proposition to slaughter thousands of our

fellow-creatures ? Did we feel as if threatened with a calamity more fearful than earthquakes, famine, or pestilence ? The blight which might fall on our prosperity, drew attention ; but the thought of devoting as a people, our power and resources to the destruction of mankind, of those whom a common nature, whom reason, conscience, and Christianity command us to love and save, did this thrill us with horror ? Did the solemn inquiry break forth through our land, is the dreadful necessity indeed laid upon us to send abroad death and woe ? No. There was little manifestation of the sensibility with which men and Christians should look such an evil in the face. As a people, we are still seared and blinded to the crimes and miseries of war. The principles of honor, to which the barbarism and infatuation of dark ages gave birth, prevail among us. The generous, merciful spirit of our religion is little understood. The law of love preached from the cross and written in the blood of the Saviour, is trampled on by public men. The true dignity of man, which consists in breathing and cherishing God's spirit of justice and philanthropy towards every human being, is counted folly in comparison with that spirit of vindictiveness and self-aggrandizement, which turns our earth into an image of the abodes of the damned. How long will the friends of humanity, of religion, of Christ, silently, passively, uncomplainingly, suffer the men of this world, the ambitious, vindictive, and selfish, to array them against their brethren in conflicts which they condemn and abhor ? Shall not truth, humanity, and the mild and holy spirit of Christianity, find a voice to rebuke and awe the wickedness which precipitates nations into war, and to startle and awaken nations to their fearful responsibility in taking

arms against the children of their Father in heaven? Prince of Peace! Saviour of men! speak in thine own voice of love, power, and fearful warning; and redeem the world for which thou hast died, from lawless and cruel passions, from the spirit of rapine and murder from the powers of darkness and hell!

MINISTRY FOR THE POOR.

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE BENEVOLENT FRATERNITY OF CHURCHES,

BOSTON, APRIL 9, 1835.

LUKE iv. 18: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor."

WE are met together on the first anniversary of the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches, an institution formed for the purpose of providing a ministry for the poor, and of thus communicating moral and spiritual blessings to the most destitute portion of the community. We may well thank God for living in a state of society, in which such a design finds cordial support. We should rejoice in this token of human progress. Man has always felt for the outward wants and sufferings of man. This institution shows, that he is alive to the higher capacities, the deeper cravings of his fellow-beings. This institution is one of the forms in which the spirit of Christianity is embodied, a spirit of reverence and love for the human soul, of sympathy with its fall, of intense desire for its redemption.

On this occasion there is but one topic of which I can speak, and that is the claims of the poor as Moral, Spiritual beings; and it is a topic on which I enter with a consciousness of insufficiency. The claims of outward and worldly things I can comprehend. I can look through wealth, pomp, rank. I can meet unmoved the most imposing forms of earthly dignity; but the immortal principle in the heart of the poorest human being, I approach with awe. There I see a mystery in which my faculties are lost. I see an existence, before which the duration of the world and the outward heavens is a span. I say that I see it. I am not surrendering myself to imagination; I have a consciousness of truth, or rather a consciousness of falling beneath the truth. I feel, then, my incompetency to be just to this subject. But we must do what we can. No testimony, however feeble, if lifted up in sincerity in behalf of great principles, is ever lost. Through weak man, if sanctified by a simple, humble love of truth, a higher power than man's is pleased to work. May that power overshadow us, and work within us, and open every soul to truth.

To awaken a Spiritual interest in the poor, this is my object. I wish not to diminish your sympathy with their outward condition; I would increase it. But their physical sufferings are not their chief evils. The great calamity of the poor is not their poverty, understanding this word in the usual sense, but the tendency of their privations, and of their social rank, to degradation of mind. Give them the Christian spirit, and their lot would not be intolerable. Remove from them the misery which they bring on themselves by evil-doing, and separate from their inevitable sufferings the aggravations

which come from crime, and their burden would be light compared with what now oppresses them.

The outward condition of the poor is a hard one. I mean not to criticize it with the apathy of the stoic, to deny that pain is an evil, privation a loss of good. But when I compare together different classes as existing at this moment in the civilized world, I cannot think the difference between the rich and the poor, in regard to mere physical suffering, so great as is sometimes imagined. That some of the indigent among us die of scanty food, is undoubtedly true; but vastly more in this community die from eating too much, than from eating too little; vastly more from excess, than starvation. So as to clothing, many shiver from want of defences against the cold; but there is vastly more suffering among the rich from absurd and criminal modes of dress, which fashion has sanctioned, than among the poor from deficiency of raiment. Our daughters are oftener brought to the grave by their rich attire, than our beggars by their nakedness. So the poor are often over-worked, but they suffer less than many among the rich who have no work to do, no interesting object to fill up life, to satisfy the infinite cravings of man for action. According to our present modes of education, how many of our daughters are victims of *ennui*, a misery unknown to the poor, and more intolerable than the weariness of excessive toil! The idle young man spending the day in exhibiting his person in the street, ought not to excite the envy of the overtasked poor, and this cumberer of the ground is found exclusively among the rich.

I repeat it, the condition of the poor deserves sympathy; but let us not, by exaggeration of its pains, turn away our minds from the great inward sources of their

misery. In this city, the condition of a majority of the indigent is such as would be thought eligible elsewhere. Insure to a European peasant an abundance of wheaten bread through every season of the year, and he would bless his easy lot. Among us, many a poor family, if doomed to live on bread, would murmur at its hard fare; and accordingly the table of the indigent is daily spread with condiments and viands hardly known in the cottage of the transatlantic laborer. The Greenlander and Laplander dwelling in huts and living on food compared with which the accommodations of our poor are abundant, are more than content. They would not exchange their wastes for our richest soils and proudest cities. It is not, then, the physical suffering of the poor, but their relation to the rest of society, the want of means of inward life, the degrading influences of their position, to which their chief misery is to be traced.

Let not the condition of the poor be spoken of as necessarily wretched. Give them the Christian spirit, and they would find in their lot the chief elements of good. For example, the domestic affections may and do grow up among the poor, and these are to all of us the chief springs of earthly happiness. And it deserves consideration, that the poor have their advantages as well as disadvantages in respect to domestic ties. Their narrow condition obliges them to do more for one another, than is done among the rich; and this necessity, as is well known, sometimes gives a vigor and tenderness to the love of parents and children, brothers and sisters, not always found in the luxurious classes, where wealth destroys this mutual dependence, this need of mutual help. Nor let it be said, that the poor cannot enjoy domestic happiness for want of the means of educating their chil-

dren. A sound moral judgment is of more value in education, than all wealth and all talent. For want of this, the children of men of genius and opulence are often the worst trained in the community ; and if, by our labors, we can communicate this moral soundness to the poor, we shall open among them the fountain of the only pure domestic felicity.

In this country, the poor might enjoy the most important advantages of the rich, had they the moral and religious cultivation consistent with their lot. Books find their way into every house, however mean ; and especially that book which contains more nutriment for the intellect, imagination, and heart, than all others ; I mean, of course, the Bible. And I am confident, that among the poor are those, who find in that one book, more enjoyment, more awakening truth, more lofty and beautiful imagery, more culture to the whole soul, than thousands of the educated find in their general studies, and vastly more than millions among the rich find in that superficial, transitory literature, which consumes all their reading hours.

Even the pleasures of a refined taste are not denied to the poor, but might easily be opened to them by a wise moral culture. True, their rooms are not lined with works of art ; but the living beauty of nature opens on the eyes of all her children ; and we know from the history of self-educated genius, that sometimes the inhabitant of a hovel, looking out on the serene sky, the illumined cloud, the setting sun, has received into his rapt spirit, impressions of divine majesty and loveliness, to which the burning words of poetry give but faint utterance. True, the rich may visit distant scenery, and feed their eyes on the rarest and most stupendous manifestations of creative power ; but the earth and common

sky reveal, in some of their changeful aspects, a grandeur as awful as Niagara or the Andes; and nothing is wanting to the poor man in his ordinary walks, but a more spiritual eye to discern a beauty which has never yet been embodied in the most inspired works of sculpture or painting.

Thus for the poor, as for all men, there are provisions for happiness; and it deserves remark, that their happiness has a peculiar dignity. It is more honorable to be content with few outward means, than with many; to be cheerful amidst privation, than amidst overflowing plenty. A poor man, living on bread and water, because he will not ask for more than bare sustenance requires, and leading a quiet, cheerful life through his benevolent sympathies, his joy in duty, his trust in God, is one of the true heroes of the race, and understands better the meaning of happiness, than we, who cannot be at ease unless we clothe ourselves "in purple, and fare sumptuously every day," unless we surround, defend, and adorn ourselves with all the products of nature and art. His scantiness of outward means is a sign of inward fulness, whilst the slavery in which most of us live, to luxuries and accommodations, shows the poverty within.

I have given the fair side of the poor man's lot. I have shown the advantages placed within his reach; but I do not therefore call him happy. His advantages are too commonly lost through want of inward culture. The poor are generally wretched, with many means of good. Think not that I mean to throw one false color on their actual state. It is miserable enough to awaken deep sympathy; but their misery springs not so much from physical causes, which cannot be withstood, as from moral want. The moral influences of their condition,

of their rank in society, of their connexion with other classes, these are more terrible than hunger or cold, and to these I desire to turn your chief regard.

What, then, are the moral influences of poverty, its influences on character, which deserve our chief attention? As one of its most fatal effects, I would observe, in the first place, that it impairs, often destroys, self-respect. I know, and rejoice to know, that the institutions of this country do much to counteract this influence of poverty; but still it exists and works frequent debasement. It is hard for any of us to interpret justly our own nature, and how peculiarly hard for the poor! Uninstructed in the import and dignity of their rational and moral powers, they naturally measure themselves by their outward rank. Living amidst the worshippers of wealth, they naturally feel as if degraded by the want of it. They read in the looks, tones, and manners of the world, the evidences of being regarded as an inferior race, and want inward force to repel this cruel, disheartening falsehood. They hear the word *respectable* confined to other conditions, and the word *low* applied to their own. Now, habitual subjection to slight or contempt, is crushing to the spirit. It is exceedingly hard for a human being to comprehend and appreciate himself, amidst outward humiliation. There is no greater man than he who is true to himself, when all around deny and forsake him. Can we wonder that the poor, thus abandoned, should identify themselves with their lot; that in their rags they should see the sign of inward as well as outward degradation?

Another cause which blights their self-respect, is their dependence for pecuniary aid. It is hard to ask alms and retain an erect mind. Dependence breeds

servility, and he who has stooped to another cannot be just to himself. The want of self-respect is a preparation for every evil. Degraded in their own and others' esteem, the poor are removed from the salutary restraint of opinion; and having no caste to lose, no honor to forfeit, often abandon themselves recklessly to the grossest vice.

2. The condition of the poor is unfriendly to the action and unfolding of the intellect, a sore calamity to a rational being. In most men, indeed, the intellect is narrowed by exclusive cares for the body. In most, the consciousness of its excellence is crushed by the low uses to which it is perpetually doomed. But still, in most, a degree of activity is given to the mind by the variety and extent of their plans for wealth or subsistence. The bodily wants of most, carry them in a measure into the future, engage them in enterprises requiring invention, sagacity, and skill. It is the unhappiness of the poor, that they are absorbed in immediate wants, in provisions for the passing day, in obtaining the next meal, or in throwing off a present burden. Accordingly their faculties "live and move," or rather pine and perish, in the present moment. Hope and Imagination, the wings of the soul, carrying it forward and upward, languish in the poor; for the future is uninviting. The darkness of the present broods over coming years. The great idea, which stirs up in other men a world of thought, the idea of a better lot, has almost faded from the poor man's mind. He almost ceases to hope for his children, as well as for himself. Even parental love, to many the chief quickener of the intellect, stagnates through despair. Thus poverty starves the mind.

And there is another way in which it produces this effect, particularly worthy the notice of this assembly The poor have no society beyond their own class; that is, beyond those who are confined to their own narrow field of thought. We all know, that it is contact with other minds, and especially with the more active and soaring, from which the intellect receives its chief impulse. Few of us could escape the paralyzing influence of perpetual intercourse with the uncultivated, sluggish, and narrow-minded; and here we see, what I wish particularly to bring to view, how the poor suffer from the boasted civilization of our times, which is built so much on the idea of Property. In communities little advanced in opulence, no impassable barrier separates different classes, as among ourselves. The least improved are not thrown to a distance from those, who, through natural endowment or peculiar excitement, think more strongly than the rest; and why should such division exist anywhere? How cruel and unchristian are the pride and prejudice which form the enlightened into a caste, and leave the ignorant and depressed to strengthen and propagate ignorance and error without end.

3. I proceed to another evil of poverty, its disastrous influence on the domestic affections. Kindle these affections in the poor man's hut, and you give him the elements of the best earthly happiness. But the more delicate sentiments find much to chill them in the abodes of indigence. A family crowded into a single and often narrow apartment, which must answer at once the ends of parlour, kitchen, bed-room, nursery, and hospital, must, without great energy and self-respect, want neatness, order, and comfort. Its members are perpetually

exposed to annoying, petty interference. The decencies of life can be with difficulty observed. Woman, a drudge, and in dirt, loses her attractions. The young grow up without the modest reserve and delicacy of feeling, in which purity finds so much of its defence. Coarseness of manners and language, too sure a consequence of a mode of life which allows no seclusion, becomes the habit almost of childhood, and hardens the mind for vicious intercourse in future years. The want of a neat, orderly home, is among the chief evils of the poor. Crowded in filth, they cease to respect one another. The social affections wither amidst perpetual noise, confusion, and clashing interests. In these respects, the poor often fare worse than the uncivilized. True, the latter has a ruder hut, but his habits and tastes lead him to live abroad. Around him is a boundless, unoccupied nature, where he ranges at will, and gratifies his passion for liberty. Hardened from infancy against the elements, he lives in the bright light and pure air of heaven. In the city, the poor man must choose between his close room, and the narrow street. The appropriation of almost every spot on earth to private use, and the habits of society, do not allow him to gather his family, or meet his tribe, under a spreading tree. He has a home, without the comforts of home. He cannot cheer it by inviting his neighbours to share his repast. He has few topics of conversation with his wife and children, except their common wants. Of consequence, sensual pleasures are the only means of ministering to that craving for enjoyment, which can never be destroyed in human nature. These pleasures, in other dwellings, are more or less refined by taste. The table is spread with neatness and order; and a decency pervades the meal,

which shows that man is more than a creature of sense. The poor man's table strewed with broken food, and seldom approached with courtesy and self-respect, serves too often to nourish only a selfish, animal life, and to bring the partakers of it still nearer to the brute. I speak not of what is necessary and universal; for poverty, under sanctifying influences, may find a heaven in its narrow home; but I speak of tendencies which are strong, and which only a strong religious influence can overcome.

4. I proceed to another unhappy influence exerted on the poor. They live in the sight and in the midst of innumerable indulgences and gratifications, which are placed beyond their reach. Their connexion with the affluent, though not close enough for spiritual communication, is near enough to inflame appetites, desires, wants, which cannot be satisfied. From their cheerless rooms, they look out on the abodes of luxury. At their cold, coarse meal, they hear the equipage conveying others to tables groaning under plenty, crowned with sparkling wines, and fragrant with the delicacies of every clime. Fainting with toil, they meet others unburdened, as they think, with a labor or a care. They feel, that all life's prizes have fallen to others. Hence burning desire. Hence brooding discontent. Hence envy and hatred. Hence crime, justified in a measure to their own minds, by what seem to them the unjust and cruel inequalities of social life. Here are some of the miseries of civilization. The uncivilized man is not exasperated by the presence of conditions happier than his own. There is no disproportion between his idea of happiness and his lot. Among the poor the disproportion is infinite. You all understand how much we judge

our lot by comparison. Thus the very edifices, which a century ago seemed to our fathers luxurious, seem now to multitudes hardly comfortable, because surrounded by more commodious and beautiful dwellings. We little think of the gloom added to the poor by the contiguity of the rich. They are preyed on by artificial wants, which can only be gratified by crime. They are surrounded by enjoyments, which fraud or violence can make their own. Unhappily the prevalent, I had almost said, the whole spirit of the rich, increases these temptations of the poor. Very seldom does a distinct, authentic voice of wisdom come to them from the high places of society, telling them that riches are not happiness, and that a felicity which riches cannot buy, is within reach of all. Wealth-worship is the spirit of the prosperous, and this is the strongest possible inculcation of discontent and crime on the poor. The rich satisfy themselves with giving alms to the needy. They think little of more fatal gifts, which they perpetually bestow. They think little, that their spirit and lives, their self-indulgence and earthliness, their idolatry of outward prosperity, and their contempt of inferior conditions, are perpetually teaching the destitute, that there is but one good on earth, namely, property, the very good in which the poor have no share. They little think, that by these influences they do much to inflame, embitter, and degrade the minds of the poor, to fasten them to the earth, to cut off their communication with Heaven.

5. I pass to another sore trial of the poor. Whilst their condition, as we have seen, denies them many gratifications, which on every side meet their view and inflame desire, it places within their reach many debasing gratifications. Human nature has a strong thirst

for pleasures which excite it above its ordinary tone, which relieve the monotony of life. This drives the prosperous from their pleasant homes to scenes of novelty and stirring amusement. How strongly must it act on those who are weighed down by anxieties and privations! How intensely must the poor desire to forget for a time the wearing realities of life! And what means of escape does society afford or allow them? What present do civilization and science make to the poor? Strong drink, ardent spirits, liquid poison, liquid fire, a type of the fire of hell! In every poor man's neighbourhood flows a Lethean stream, which laps him for a while in oblivion of all his humiliations and sorrows! The power of this temptation can be little understood by those of us, whose thirst for pleasure is regularly supplied by a succession of innocent pleasures, who meet soothing and exciting objects wherever we turn. The uneducated poor, without resource in books, in their families, in a well-spread board, in cheerful apartments, in places of fashionable resort, and pressed down by disappointment, debt, despondence, and exhausting toils, are driven by an impulse dreadfully strong, to the haunts of intemperance; and there they plunge into a misery sorer than all the tortures invented by man. They quench the light of reason, cast off the characteristics of humanity, blot out God's image as far as they have power, and take their place among the brutes. Terrible misery! And this, I beg you to remember, comes to them from the very civilization in which they live. They are victims to the progress of science and the arts; for these multiply the poison which destroys them. They are victims to the rich; for it is the capital of the rich, which erects the distillery, and

surrounds them with temptations to self-murder. They are victims to a partial advancement of society, which multiplies gratifications and allurements, without awakening proportionate moral power to withstand them.

Such are the evils of poverty. It is a condition, which offers many and peculiar obstructions to the developement of intellect and affection, of self-respect and self-control. The poor are peculiarly exposed to discouraging views of themselves, of human nature, of human life. The consciousness of their own intellectual and moral power slumbers. Their faith in God's goodness, in virtue, in immortality, is obscured by the darkness of their present lot. Ignorant, desponding, and sorely tempted, have they not solemn claims on their more privileged brethren, for aids which they have never yet received?

I have thus shown, as I proposed, that the chief evils of poverty are moral in their origin and character; and for these I would awaken your concern. With physical sufferings we sympathize. When shall the greater misery move our hearts? Is there nothing to startle us in the fact, that in every large city dwells a multitude of human beings, falling or fallen into extreme moral degradation, living in dark, filthy houses, or in damp, unventilated cellars, where the eye lights on no beauty and the ear is continually wounded with discord, where the outward gloom is a type of the darkened mind, where the name of God is heard only when profaned, where charity is known only as a resource for sloth, where the child is trained amidst coarse manners, impure words, and the fumes of intemperance, and is thence sent forth to prowl as a beggar. From these abodes issues a louder, more piercing cry for help and

strength, than physical want ever uttered. I do not mean that all the poor are such as I have described. Far from it. Among them are the "salt of the earth," the "lights of the world," the elect of God. There is no necessary connexion of poverty and crime. Christianity knows no distinction of rank, and has proved itself equal to the wants of all conditions of men. Still poverty has tendencies to the moral degradation which I have described; and to counteract these, should be esteemed one of the most solemn duties and precious privileges bequeathed by Christ to his followers.

From the views now given of the chief evils of poverty, it follows, that Moral and Religious culture is the great blessing to be bestowed on the poor. By this, it is not intended that their physical condition demands no aid. Let charity minister to their pressing wants and sufferings. But let us bear it in mind, that no charity produces permanent good, but that which goes beneath the body, which reaches the mind, which touches the inward springs of improvement, and awakens some strength of purpose, some pious or generous emotion, some self-respect. That charity is most useful, which removes obstructions to well-doing and temptations to evil from the way of the poor, and encourages them to strive for their own true good. Something, indeed, may be done for the moral benefit of the indigent by wise legislation; I do not mean by poor-laws; but by enactments intended to remove, as far as possible, degrading circumstances from their condition. For example, the laws should prohibit the letting of an apartment to a poor family, which is not tenantable, which cannot but injure health, which cannot be ventilated, which wants the necessary means of preventing accumulations of

filth. Such ordinances, connected with provisions for cleansing every alley, and for carrying pure, wholesome water in abundance to every dwelling, would do not a little for the health, cleanliness, and self-respect of the poor; and on these, their moral well-being in no small degree depends.

Our chief reliance, however, must be placed on more direct and powerful means than legislation. The poor need, and must receive Moral and Religious Culture, such as they have never yet enjoyed. I say Culture; and I select this term, because it expresses the developement of Inward Principles; and without this, nothing effectual can be done for rich or poor. Unhappily, religion has been, for the most part, taught to the poor mechanically, superficially, as a tradition. It has been imposed on them as a restraint, or a form; it has been addressed to the senses, or to the sensual imagination, and not to the higher principles. An outward hell, or an outward heaven, has too often been the highest motive brought to bear on their minds. But something more is wanted; a deeper work, an inward culture, the developement of the reason, the conscience, the affections, and the moral will. True religion is a life unfolded within, not something forced on us from abroad. The poor man needs an elevating power within, to resist the depressing tendencies of his outward lot. Spiritual culture is the only effectual service we can send him, and let his misery plead with us to bestow it to the extent of our power.

Had I time, I might show that moral and religious principles, as far as they are strengthened in the breasts of the poor, meet all the wants and evils which have now been portrayed; that they give them force to bear

up against all the adverse circumstances of their lot, inspire them with self-respect, refine their manners, give impulse to their intellectual powers, open to them the springs of domestic peace, teach them to see without murmuring, the superior enjoyments of others, and rescue them from the excesses into which multitudes are driven by destitution and despair. But these topics are not only too extensive, but are to a degree familiar, though by no means felt as they should be. I conceive that I shall better answer the purpose of awakening a spiritual interest in this class of society, by confining myself to a single point, by showing, that the Moral and Religious Culture which I claim for the poor, is the highest cultivation which a human being can receive. We are all of us, I fear, blinded on this subject, by the errors and prejudices of our own education. We are apt to imagine, that the only important culture of a human being comes from libraries, literary institutions, and elegant accomplishments; that is, from means beyond the reach of the poor. Advantages offered by wealth seem to us the great, and essential means of bringing forward the human mind. Perhaps we smile at hearing the word *cultivation* applied to the poor. The best light which their condition admits, seems darkness compared with the knowledge imparted by our seminaries of learning; and the highest activity of mind to which they can be excited, is scornfully contrasted with what is called forth in their superiors by works of philosophy and genius. There is, among not a few, a contemptuous estimate of the culture which may be extended to the poor, of the good which they are capable of receiving; and hence, much of the prevalent indifference as to furnishing them the means of spiritual growth. Now this is

a weak and degrading prejudice. I affirm, that the highest culture is open alike to rich and poor. I affirm, that the rich may extend their most precious acquisitions to the poor. There is nothing in indigence to exclude the noblest improvements. The impartial Father designs his best gifts for all. Exclusive good, or that which only a few can enjoy, is comparatively worthless. Essential good, is the most freely diffused. It is time to put away our childish notions as to human improvement; it is time to learn, that advantages which are a monopoly of the few, are not necessary to the developement of human nature, that the soul grows best by helps which are accessible to all.

The truth is, that there is no cultivation of the human being, worthy of the name, but that which begins and ends with the Moral and Religious nature. No other teaching can make a Man. We are striving, indeed, to develope the soul almost exclusively by intellectual stimulants and nutriment, by schools and colleges, by accomplishments and fine arts. We are hoping to form men and women by literature and science; but all in vain. We shall learn in time that moral and religious culture is the foundation and strength of all true cultivation; that we are deforming human nature by the means relied on for its growth, and that the poor who receive a care which awakens their consciences and moral sentiments, start under happier auspices than the prosperous, who place supreme dependence on the education of the intellect and the taste.

It is common to measure the cultivation of men by their knowledge; and this is certainly an important element and means of improvement. But knowledge is various, differing in different men according to the ob-

jects which most engage their minds; and by these objects its worth must be judged. It is not the extent, but the kind of knowledge, which determines the measure of cultivation. In truth, it is foolish to talk of any knowledge as extensive. The most eminent philosopher is of yesterday, and knows nothing. Newton felt that he had gathered but a few pebbles on the shores of a boundless ocean. The moment we attempt to penetrate a subject, we learn that it has unfathomable depths. The known is a sign of the infinite unknown. Every discovery conducts us to an abyss of darkness. In every thing, from the grain of sand to the stars, the wise man finds mysteries, before which his knowledge shrinks into nothingness. It is the kind, not the extent of knowledge, by which the advancement of a human being must be measured; and that kind which alone exalts a man, is placed within the reach of all. Moral and Religious Truth, this is the treasure of the intellect, and all are poor without it. This transcends physical truth, as far as mind transcends matter, or as heaven is lifted above earth. Indeed, physical science parts with its chief dignity, when separated from morals; when it is not used to shadow forth, confirm, and illustrate spiritual truth.

The true cultivation of a human being, consists in the developement of great moral ideas; that is, the Ideas of God, of Duty, of Right, of Justice, of Love, of Self-sacrifice, of Moral Perfection as manifested in Christ, of Happiness, of Immortality, of Heaven. The elements or germs of these ideas, belong to every soul, constitute its essence, and are intended for endless expansion These are the chief distinctions of our nature; they constitute our humanity. To unfold these

is the great work of our being. The Light in which these ideas rise on the mind, the Love which they awaken, and the Force of Will with which they are brought to sway the outward and inward life, here and here only, are the measures of human cultivation.

These views show us, that the highest culture is within the reach of the poor. It is not knowledge poured on us from abroad, but the developement of the elementary principles of the soul itself, which constitutes the true growth of a human being. Undoubtedly, knowledge from abroad is essential to the awakening of these principles. But that which conduces most to this end, is offered alike to rich and poor. Society and Experience, Nature and Revelation, our chief moral and religious teachers, and the great quickeners of the soul, do not open their schools to a few favorites, do not initiate a small caste into their mysteries, but are ordained by God to be lights and blessings to all.

The highest culture, I repeat it, is in reach of the poor, and is sometimes attained by them. Without science, they are often wiser than the philosopher. The astronomer disdains them, but they look above his stars. The geologist disdains them, but they look deeper than the earth's centre ; they penetrate their own souls, and find there mightier, diviner elements, than upheaved continents attest. In other words, the great ideas of which I have spoken, may be, and often are, unfolded more in the poor man than among the learned or renowned ; and in this case the poor man is the most cultivated. For example, take the idea of justice. Suppose a man, eminent for acquisitions of knowledge, but in whom this idea is but faintly developed. By justice he understands little more than respect for the rights of property.

That it means respect for all the rights, and especially for the moral claims, of every human being, of the lowest as well as most exalted, has perhaps never entered his mind, much less been expanded and invigorated into a broad, living conviction. Take now the case of a poor man, to whom, under Christ's teaching, the idea of the Just has become real, clear, bright, and strong; who recognises, to its full extent, the right of property, though it operates against himself; but who does not stop here; who comprehends the higher rights of men as rational and moral beings, their right to exercise and unfold all their powers, their right to the means of improvement, their right to search for truth and to utter their honest convictions, their right to consult first the monitor in their own breasts and to follow wherever it leads, their right to be esteemed and honored according to their moral efforts, their right, when injured, to sympathy and succour against every oppressor. Suppose, I say, the poor man to rise to the comprehension of this enlarged justice, to revere it, to enthrone it over his actions, to render to every human being, friend or foe, near or far off, whatever is his due, to abstain conscientiously, not only from injurious deeds, but from injurious thoughts, judgments, feelings, and words. Is he not a more cultivated man, and has he not a deeper foundation and surer promise of truth, than the student, who, with much outward knowledge, does not comprehend men's highest rights, whose scientific labors are perhaps degraded by injustice towards his rivals, who, had he power, would fetter every intellect which threatens to outstrip his own?

The great idea on which human cultivation especially depends, is that of God. This is the concentration of

all that is beautiful, glorious, holy, blessed. It transcends immeasurably in worth and dignity all the science treasured up in cyclopedias or libraries; and this may be unfolded in the poor as truly as in the rich. It is not an idea to be elaborated by studies, which can be pursued only in leisure or by opulence. Its elements belong to every soul, and are especially to be found in our moral nature, in the idea of duty, in the feeling of reverence, in the approving sentence which we pass on virtue, in our disinterested affections, and in the wants and aspirations which carry us toward the Infinite. There is but one way of unfolding these germs of the idea of God, and that is, faithfulness to the best convictions of duty and of the Divine Will, which we have hitherto gained. God is to be known by obedience, by likeness, by sympathy, that is, by moral means, which are open alike to rich and poor. Many a man of science has not known him. The pride of science, like a thick cloud, has hidden from the philosopher the Spiritual Sun, the only true light, and for want of this quickening ray, he has fallen in culture far, very far, below the poor.

These remarks have been drawn from me by the proneness of our times to place human culture in physical knowledge, and especially in degrees of it denied to the mass of the people. To this knowledge I would on no account deny great value. In its place, it is an important means of human improvement. I look with admiration on the intellectual force, which combines and masters scattered facts, and by analysis and comparison ascends to the general laws of the material universe. But the philosopher, who does not see in the force within him, something nobler than the outward nature which he analyzes, who, in tracing mechanical and chemical

agencies, is unconscious of a higher action in his own soul, who is not led by all finite powers to the Omnipotent, and who does not catch, in the order and beauty of the universe, some glimpses of Spiritual Perfection, stops at the very threshold of the temple of truth. Miserably narrow is the culture which confines the soul to Matter, which turns it to the Outward as to something nobler than itself. I fear, the spirit of science, at the present day, is too often a degradation rather than the true culture of the soul. It is the bowing down of the heaven-born spirit before unthinking mechanism. It seeks knowledge, rather for animal, transitory purposes, than for the nutriment of the imperishable inward life; and yet the worshippers of science pity or contemn the poor, because denied this means of cultivation. Unhappy poor! shut out from libraries, laboratories, and learned institutes! In view of this world's wisdom, it avails you nothing, that your own nature, manifested in your own and other souls, that God's word and works, that the ocean, earth, and sky, are laid open to you; that you may acquaint yourselves with the Divine Perfections, with the character of Christ, with the duties of life, with the virtues, the generous sacrifices, and the beautiful and holy emotions, which are a revelation and pledge of heaven. All these are nothing, do not lift you to the rank of cultivated men, because the mysteries of the telescope and microscope, of the air-pump and crucible, are not revealed to you! I would they were revealed to you. I believe the time is coming when Christian benevolence will delight in spreading all truth and all refinements through all ranks of society. But meanwhile be not discouraged. One ray of moral and religious truth is worth all the wisdom of the schools. One les-

son from Christ will carry you higher than years of study under those who are too enlightened to follow this celestial guide.

My hearers, do not contemn the poor man for his ignorance. Has he seen the Right? Has he felt the binding force of the Everlasting Moral Law? Has the beauty of virtue, in any of its forms, been revealed to him? Then he has entered the highest school of wisdom. Then a light has dawned within him, worth all the physical knowledge of all worlds. It almost moves me to indignation, when I hear the student exalting his science, which at every step meets impenetrable darkness, above the idea of Duty and above veneration for goodness and God. It is true, and ought to be understood, that outward nature, however tortured, probed, dissected, never reveals truths so sublime or precious, as are wrapped up in the consciousness of the meanest individual, and laid open to every eye in the word of Christ.

I trust it will not be inferred from what I have said of the superiority of moral and religious culture to physical science, that the former requires or induces a neglect or disparagement of the latter. No, it is the friend of all truth, the enemy of none. It is propitious to intellect, and incites to the investigation of the laws and order of the universe. This view deserves a brief illustration, because an opposite opinion has sometimes prevailed, because reproach has sometimes been thrown on religious culture, as if it narrowed the mind and barred it against the lights of physical science. There cannot be a more groundless charge. Superstition contracts and darkens the mind; but that living faith in moral and religious truth, for which I contend as the highest culture of rich

and poor, is in no respect narrow or exclusive. It does not fasten the mind for ever on a few barren doctrines. In proportion to its growth, it cherishes our whole nature, gives a wide range to thought, opens the intellect to the true, and the imagination to the beautiful. The great principles of moral and religious science, are, above all others, fruitful, life-giving, and have intimate connexions with all other truth. The Love towards God and man, which is the centre in which they meet, is the very spirit of research into nature. It finds perpetual delight in tracing out the harmonies and vast and beneficent arrangements of creation, and inspires an interest in the works of the Universal Father, more profound, intense, enduring, than philosophical curiosity. I conceive, too, that faith in moral and religious truth has strong affinities with the scientific spirit, and thus contributes to its perfection. Both, for example, have the same objects, that is, universal truths. As another coincidence, I would observe, that it is the highest prerogative of scientific genius, to interpret obscure signs, to dart from faint hints to sublime discoveries, to read in a few fragments the history of vanished worlds and ages, to detect in the falling apple the law which rules the spheres. Now it is the property of moral and religious faith, to see in the finite the manifestation of the Infinite, in the present the germ of the boundless future, in the visible the traces of the Incomprehensible Unseen, in the powers and wants of the soul its imperishable destiny. Such is the harmony between the religious and the philosophical spirit. It is to a higher moral and religious culture, that I look for a higher interpretation of nature. The laws of nature, we must remember, had their origin in the Mind of God. Of this they are the product, expression, and type; and

I cannot but believe, that the human mind which best understands, and which partakes most largely of the divine, has a power of interpreting nature, which is accorded to no other. It has harmonies with the system which it is to unfold. It contains in itself the principles which gave birth to creation. As yet, science has hardly penetrated beneath the surface of nature. The principles of animal and vegetable life, of which all organized beings around us are but varied modifications, the forces which pervade or constitute matter, and the links between matter and mind, are as yet wrapped in darkness; and how little is known of the adaptations of the physical and the spiritual world to one another! Whence is light to break in on these depths of creative wisdom? I look for it to the spirit of philosophy, baptized, hallowed, exalted, made piercing by a new culture of the moral and religious principles of the human soul.

The topic opens before me as I advance. The superiority of moral and religious to all other culture, is confirmed by a throng of arguments not yet touched. The peculiar wisdom which this culture gives, by revealing to us the end, the Ultimate Good of our being, which nothing else teaches; the peculiar power which it gives, power over ourselves, so superior to the most entensive sway over the outward universe; the necessity of moral and religious culture to make knowledge a blessing, to save it from being a curse; these are weighty considerations which press on my mind, but cannot be urged. They all go to show, that the culture which the poor may receive, is worth all others; that in sending among them religious and moral influences, you send the highest good of the universe.

My friends, I have now set before you the chief evils

of the poor, and have shown you the greatness and dignity of the culture which is within their reach; and the great conviction, which I wish by these views to carry home to every mind, is, that we are solemnly bound to cherish and manifest a strong moral and religious interest in the poor; and to give them, as far as we have power, the means of moral and religious cultivation. Your sympathies with their bodily wants and pains, I, of course, would not weaken. We must not neglect their bodies under pretence of caring for their souls; nor must we, on the other hand, imagine, that in providing for their outward wants, we have acquitted ourselves of all Christian obligations. To scatter from our abundance occasional alms, is not enough; we must bring them to our minds as susceptible of deeper evils than hunger and cold; and as formed for higher goods than food or the cheering flame. The love of Christ toward them, should seem to us no extravagance, no blind enthusiasm, but a love due to human nature in all its forms. To look beyond the outward to the spiritual in man, is the great distinction of Christian love. The soul of a fellow-creature must come out, if I may so say, and become more visible and prominent to us than his bodily frame. To see and estimate the spiritual nature of the poor, is greater wisdom than to span earth or heaven. To elevate this, is a greater work than to build cities. To give moral life to the fallen, is a higher achievement than to raise the dead from their graves. Such is the philanthropy which characterizes our religion; and without this, we can do little effectual good to the poor.

I am here teaching a difficult, but great duty. To acquire and maintain an unaffected conviction of the superiority of the spiritual in man to every thing outward, is

a hard task, especially to the prosperous, and yet among the most essential. In the poor man, walking through our streets, with a haggard countenance and tottering step, we ought to see something greater than all the opulence and splendor which surround him. On this foundation of respect for every soul, are built all social duties, and none can be thoroughly performed without it. On this point I feel that I use no swollen language. Words cannot exaggerate the worth of the soul. We have all felt when looking above us into the atmosphere, that there was an infinity of space, which we could not explore. When I look into man's spirit and see there the germs of an immortal life, I feel more deeply that an infinity lies hid beyond what I see. In the idea of Duty, which springs up in every human heart, I discern a Law more sacred and boundless than gravitation, which binds the soul to a more glorious universe than that to which attraction binds the body, and which is to endure though the laws of physical nature pass away. Every moral sentiment, every intellectual action, is to me a hint, a prophetic sign, of a spiritual power to be expanded for ever, just as a faint ray from a distant star is significant of unimaginable splendor. And if this be true, is not a human being wronged, greatly wronged, who awakens in his fellow-creatures no moral concern, who receives from them no spiritual care?

It is the boast of our country, that the civil and political rights of every human being are secured; that impartial law watches alike over rich and poor. But man has other, and more important, than civil rights; and this is especially true of the poor. To him who owns nothing, what avails it that he lives in a country where property is inviolable; or what mighty boon is it

to him, that every citizen is eligible to office, when his condition is an insuperable bar to promotion? To the poor, as to all men, moral rights are most important; the right to be regarded according to their nature, to be regarded, not as animals or material instruments, but as men; the right to be esteemed and honored, according to their fidelity to the moral law; and their right to whatever aids their fellow-beings can offer for their improvement, for the growth of their highest powers. These rights are founded on the supremacy of the moral nature, and until they are recognised the poor are deeply wronged.

Our whole connexion with the poor should tend to awaken in them the consciousness of their moral powers and responsibility, and to raise them in spirit and hope above their lot. They should be aided to know themselves, by the estimate we form of them. They should be rescued from self-contempt, by seeing others impressed with the great purpose of their being. We may call the poor unfortunate, but never call them low. If faithful to their light, they stand among the high. They have no superiors, but in those who follow a brighter, purer light; and to withhold from them respect, is to defraud their virtue of a support, which is among the most sacred rights of man. Are they morally fallen and lost? They should still learn, in our unaffected concern, the worth of the fallen soul, and learn that nothing seems to us so fearful as its degradation.

This moral, spiritual interest in the poor, we should express and make effectual, by approaching them, by establishing an intercourse with them, as far as consists with other duties. We must live with them, not as another race, but as brethren. Our Christian principles

must work a new miracle, must exorcise and expel the spirit of caste. The outward distinctions of life must seem to us not "a great gulf," but superficial lines, which the chances of a day may blot out, and which are broad only to the narrow-minded. How can the educated and improved communicate themselves to their less favored fellow-creatures, but by coming near them? The strength, happiness, and true civilization of a community, are determined by nothing more than by this fraternal union among all conditions of men. Without this, a civil war virtually rages in a state. For the sake of rich as well as poor, there should be a mutual interest binding them together; there should be but one caste, that of humanity.

To render this connexion interesting and useful, we must value and cultivate the power of acting morally on the poor. There is no art so divine as that of reaching and quickening other minds. Do not tell me you are unequal to this task. What! call yourselves educated, and yet want power to approach and aid your unimproved fellow-creatures? Of what use is education, if it do not fit us to receive and give freely in our various social connexions? How wasted has been our youth, if it has taught us only the dialect and manners of a select class, and not taught us the language of humanity, not taught us to mix with and act on the mass of our fellow-creatures? How far are you raised above the poor, if you cannot comprehend, guide, or sway them? The chief endowment of a social being, I mean the power of imparting what is true and good in your own souls, you have yet to learn. You cannot learn it too soon.

Yes, I call you to seek and use the power of speak-

ing to the minds of the ignorant and poor, and especially of the poor child. Strive, each of you, to bring at least one human being to the happiness for which God made him. Awaken him to some inward moral activ'ty, for on this, not on mere outward teaching, the improvement of rich and poor alike depends. Strive to raise him above the crushing necessities of the body, by turning him to the great, kindling purpose of his being. Show him, that the fountain of all happiness is within us, and that this fountain may be opened alike in every soul. Show him, how much virtue and peace he may gain by fidelity to his domestic relations; how much progress he may make by devout and resolute use of his best opportunities; what a near union he may form with God; how beneficent an influence he may exert in his narrow sphere; what heroism may be exercised amidst privations and pains; how suffering may be turned to glory; how heaven may begin in the most unprosperous condition on earth. Surely he who can carry such truths to any human being, is charged with a glorious mission from above.

In these remarks, I have urged on all who hear me, a personal interest in the moral well-being of the poor. I am aware, however, that many can devote but little personal care to this work. But what they cannot do themselves, they can do by others; and this I hold to be one of our most sacred duties as Christians. If we cannot often visit the poor ourselves, we may send those who are qualified to serve them better. We can support ministers to study and apply the means of enlightening, comforting, reforming, and saving the ignorant and depressed. Every man, whom God has prospered, is bound to contribute to this work. The Chris-

tian ministry is indeed a blessing to all, but above all to the poor. We, who have leisure and quiet homes, and can gather round us the teachers of all ages in their writings, can better dispense with the living teacher, than the poor, who are unused to learn from books, and unaccustomed to mental effort, who can only learn through the eye and ear, through the kind look and the thrilling voice. Send them the ministers of God's truth and grace. And think not, that this office may be filled by any who will take it. There are some I know, perhaps not a few, who suppose the most common capacities equal to the Christian ministry in general, and who, of course, will incline to devolve the office of teaching the ignorant and destitute on men unfit for other vocations. Away with this disgraceful error! If there be an office worthy of angels, it is that of teaching Christian truth. The Son of God hallowed it, by sustaining it in his own person. All other labors sink before it. Royalty is impotence and a vulgar show, compared with the deep and quickening power, which many a Christian teacher has exerted on the immortal soul. Profound intellect, creative genius, thrilling eloquence, can nowhere find such scope and excitement, as in the study and communication of moral and religious truth, as in breathing into other minds the wisdom and love which were revealed in Jesus Christ; and the time will come, when they will joyfully consecrate themselves to this as their true sphere. That the ministry of the poor may be sustained by a man wanting some qualifications for a common congregation, is true; but he needs no ordinary gifts, a sound judgment, a clear mind, an insight into human nature, a spirit of patient research, the power of familiar and striking illus-

tration of truth, a glowing heart, an unaffected self-devotion to the service of mankind. Such men we are bound to provide for the poor, if they can be secured. He who will not contribute to the moral and religious culture of the destitute, is unworthy to live in Christendom. He deserves to be banished beyond the light which he will not spread. Let him deny his religion if he will; but to believe in it, and yet not seek to impart it to those who can receive no other treasure, is to cast contempt on its excellence, and to harden himself against the most sacred claims of humanity.

My friends, it is a cause of gratitude, that so much has been done in this city to furnish such a ministry as now has been described. The poor, I believe, are provided for here as in no other place in our country. The Fraternity of Churches, which I address, have in their service three ministers for this work, and the number, it is expected, will be increased; and we all know that they have not labored in vain. Their good influence we cannot doubt. The cause has been signally prospered by God. Since the institution of this ministry, it has not only carried instruction, counsel, reproof, hope, and moral strength to multitudes, who would otherwise have heard no encouraging voice, would have met no outward remembrances of Christian duty. It has produced in other classes of society still more promising effects. It has produced a connexion of the rich with the poor, a knowledge of their real state and wants, a sympathy with them, an interest in their well-being, which are the signs of a lasting improvement in society. This ministry has not been lifeless machinery. It has vitality, earnestness, force. It does not rest in a round of regular services, but seeks new means of reaching the

poor. It particularly seeks to act on the children. Not content with gathering them in Sunday-schools, it forms congregations of them for worship, and adapts to them the ordinary services of the church, so as to fix attention and touch the heart. What an invaluable service to humanity! Formerly, these children, unprovided with the means of public worship, never guided by their parents to the house of prayer, wasted and worse than wasted the Sunday in the streets, and found or made this holy season, a day of peculiar temptation and crime. Whilst the ministers of the poor are faithful to the adult, they give a special care to children, and through the child often reach the parent's heart. Through their efforts, the young who had been brought up to beg, have often been sent to the public school or the Sunday school, and in this way many a heedless foot, going down to ruin, has been turned to the path of duty. It is confidently stated, that since the establishment of this ministry a few years ago, street beggary has decreased, notwithstanding the rapid growth of our population. Happily, men of intelligence and noble hearts are willing to enter this field, and new laborers are needed. It is important that the ministers of the poor should extend their care beyond the most indigent, to that class from which the ranks of indigence are recruited, I mean to that class of laborers who are hovering over the brink of poverty, who depend on each day's toil for each day's food, and whom a short sickness or deficiency of employment reduces to want. Among these, the degrading infidelity of our days finds many of its victims, and on this account they peculiarly need to be visited by Christian friendship, and the light of truth. To connect these with regular congregations, and to incite them *to contribute* to the support of public worship, some

part of what they now too generally expend in pernicious indulgences, would be to render an essential service to morals and religion.

The work of a minister for the poor, covers much ground, and it demands superior minds. This body of men are set apart, not only to act on individuals, but to study poverty in all its aspects, in its causes, its influences, its various shapes, its growth, and its decline, and thus to give light to the legislator and philanthropist in the great work of its prevention and cure. To me, this ministry is peculiarly interesting, regarded as the beginning of a series of operations for banishing from society its chief calamity and reproach, and for changing the face of the civilized and Christian world. I see in it the expression of a silently growing purpose, that Christian communities shall not always be deformed and disgraced by the presence of an ignorant, destitute, miserable horde; that in the bosom of civilization there shall no longer exist a more wretched, degraded portion of human beings, than can be found in savage life. This horrible contrast of condition, which all large cities present, has existed too long. Shall it endure for ever? My friends, we all, as well as others, have hitherto been dreadfully insensible to this sorest evil under the sun. Long use has hardened us to it. We have lived comfortably, perhaps luxuriously, in our dwellings, whilst within a stone's throw, were fellow-creatures, the children of our Father in heaven, as nobly born and gifted as ourselves, in whose countenances might be read brutal ignorance, hopeless misery, and degrading vice. We have passed them in the street, not only without a tear but without a thought. O, how seldom has a pang shot through our hearts at the sight of our ruined fellow-creatures! Shall this insensibility

continue for ever? Shall not a new love succeed to this iron hardness of heart? Do not call the evil remediless. Sure I am, that at this moment there is enough of piety, philanthropy, and moral power in this community, to work deep changes in the poorer classes, could these energies, now scattered and slumbering, be brought to bear wisely and perseveringly on the task. Shall we decline this work? If so, we decline the noblest labor of philanthropy. If so, we must suffer, and we ought to suffer. Society ought to be troubled, to be shaken, yea convulsed, until its solemn debt to the ignorant and poor be paid. Poor there will be, but they need not, must not exist as a degraded, hopeless caste. They need not, must not be cut off from the brotherhood of humanity. Their children must not be left to inherit and propagate their crimes and woes. To put an end to such a class, is the highest office of Christian philanthropy. Do you ask how it is to be done? I answer, Christianity has wrought mighty revolutions, and in these we have an earnest of what it is able and destined to accomplish. Let us bring this into new contact with the poor. Let us send forth men, imbued with its spirit, to preach it to the poor, and still more to study poverty in all its forms, that the moral pestilence which has so long ravaged the Christian world, may at last be stayed.

I now see before me the representatives of several congregations of this city, which have united to support the ministry for the poor. Thanks to God, for this manifestation of the spirit and power of Christianity. This connexion, framed only for purposes of Christian philanthropy, looking only to the spiritual relief of our *depressed* fellow-creatures, and incapable of being per-

verted to the accumulation of ecclesiastical power, is the happiest means which could be devised, to bring our churches into stronger sympathy and closer friendship, without infringing, in the smallest degree, that principle of independence or self-government on which they are built. Is it not a plain truth, that every Christian congregation, besides providing for its own spiritual wants, is bound to devote itself to the general cause of Christianity, and to provide for spreading its own light and privileges to the destitute? By this fraternity we are discharging, in part, this sacred obligation. May it be sustained with increasing zeal, with unshaken faith, with glorious success.

My friends, is it necessary that I should urge you to contribute of your substance to the work which has now been laid before you? I am speaking to the prosperous. Let the Goodness which has prospered you, teach you the spirit in which your wealth or competence should be used. What is the true use of prosperity? Not to minister to self-indulgence and ostentation; not to widen the space between you and the less prosperous; not to multiply signs of superior rank; not to raise us to an eminence, whence we may look down on the multitude as an inferior race; but to multiply our bonds of union with our fellow-creatures, to spread our sympathies far and wide, to give us nobler spheres of action, to make us more eminently the delegates and representatives of divine beneficence. What is the true use of increasing wealth in a city? It is not, that more magnificent structures should be reared, but that our dwellings should be inhabited by a more intelligent and virtuous people; that institutions for awakening intellectual and moral life should be brought to bear on the

whole community; that the individual may be carried forward to his true happiness and perfection; that society may be bound together by stronger and purer bonds, and that the rigid laws of earthly governments may be more and more superseded by the Law of Love. Without such influences, wealth is turned into a snare and curse. If, indeed, our prosperity is to be used to spread luxurious and selfish modes of life, to form a frivolous class of fashion, to produce more striking contrasts between unfeeling opulence and abject penury, to corrupt manners and harden the heart, better were it for us, that, by the just judgment of God, it should be sunk into the depths of the sea. It avails little, that intercourse is more polished, and a new grace is thrown over life. The simple question is, Do we better understand and more strongly feel our relations to God and to our fellow-creatures? Without this, our boasted civilization is a whited sepulchre, fair to the eye, but inwardly "full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."—But I cannot end this discourse with the voice of warning. You deserve to hear the voice of encouragement and hope. One good work you are carrying on, as this anniversary testifies. One institution for instructing the ignorant and raising up the fallen, you have sustained. Let it not fall. Extend and strengthen it. Make it permanent. Bind it up with the institutions which you support for your own religious improvement. Transmit it to your children. Let your children learn, from this your example, to take part in the cause of Christ, of prophets and apostles, of holy men of all ages, in the work of regenerating society, and of extending to the whole human family, the light and blessings of the Christian faith.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

DISCOURSE

AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND, July 27, 1836.

JOHN iv. 23, 24: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

THE dedication of an edifice to the worship of God is a proper subject of gratitude and joy. Even if the consecration be made by Christians from whom we differ in opinion, we should still find satisfaction in the service. We should desire that our neighbours, whose convictions of truth and duty require them to separate from us in religious services, should enjoy the same accommodations with ourselves; and it should comfort us to think, that Christianity is so eminently "the power of God unto salvation," its great truths so plain and so quickening, that among all sects acknowledging Christ and consulting his word, its purifying influences, however counteracted by erroneous views, will more or

less be felt. We should rejoice to think, that God can be monopolized by no party; that his spirit is a universal presence; that religion, having its root in the soul of man, can live and flourish amidst many errors; that truth and goodness can no more be confined to a single church, than the light of the sun can be shut up in a private dwelling; that amidst all the diversities of forms, names, and creeds, acceptable worship may be offered to God, and the soul ascend to Heaven.

It is the custom of our times to erect beautiful structures for the purposes of the present life, for legislation, for literature, for the arts. But important as these interests are, they are not the noblest. Man's highest relations are not political, earthly, human. His whole nature is not exhausted in studying and subduing outward nature, in establishing outward order, in storing the mind with knowledge which may adorn and comfort his outward life. He has wants too deep, and powers and affections too large for the outward world. He comes from God. His closest connexion is with God; and he can find life and peace only in the knowledge of his Creator. Man's glory or true end is not revealed to us in the most magnificent structure which the architect ever reared for earthly uses. An humble spire pointing Heavenward from an obscure church, speaks of man's nature, man's dignity, man's destiny, more eloquently than all the columns and arches of Greece and Rome, the mausoleums of Asia, or the pyramids of Egypt. Is it not meet, then, to be grateful and joyful, when a house is set apart to the worship of God?

This edifice where we now meet is not indeed wholly new. Its frame is older than the oldest of us. But so

great are the changes which it has undergone, that, were they who laid its foundations to revisit the earth, they would trace hardly a feature of their work; and as it is now entered by a new religious congregation, there is a fitness in the present solemnity, by which we dedicate it to the worship of God. My purpose in this discourse, is to show that we should enter this edifice with gratitude and joy; first, because it is dedicated to Worship in the most general sense of that term; and, in the second place, on account of the particular worship to which it is set apart. I shall close with some remarks of a personal and local character, which may be allowed to one who was born and brought up on this island, whose heart swells with local attachment, and whose memory is crowded with past years, as he stands, after a long absence, within these walls where he sat in his childhood, and where some of his earliest impressions were received.

I. We ought to enter this house with gratitude and joy, for it is dedicated to Worship. Its end is, that men should meet within its walls to pay religious homage; to express and strengthen pious veneration, love, thankfulness, and confidence; to seek and receive pure influences from above; to learn the will of God; and to consecrate themselves to the virtue in which he delights. This edifice is reared to the glory of God, reared like the universe to echo with his praise, to be a monument to his being, perfection, and dominion. Worship is man's highest end, for it is the employment of his highest faculties and affections on the sublimest object. We have much for which to thank God, but for nothing so much as for the power of knowing and

adoring Himself. This creation is a glorious spectacle; but there is a more glorious existence for our minds and hearts, and that is the Creator. There is something divine in the faculties by which we study the visible world, and subject it to our wills, comfort, enjoyment. But it is a diviner faculty, by which we penetrate beyond the visible, free ourselves of the infinite and the mutable, and ascend to the Infinite and the Eternal. It is good to make earth and ocean, winds and flames, sun and stars, tributary to our present well-being. How much better to make them ministers to our spiritual wants, teachers of heavenly truth, guides to a more glorious Being than themselves, bonds of union between man and his Maker!

There have been those who have sought to disparage worship, by representing it as an arbitrary, unnatural service, a human contrivance, an invention for selfish ends. Had I time, I should be glad to disprove this sophistry, by laying open to you human nature, and showing the deep foundation laid in all its principles and wants for religion; but I can meet the objection only by a few remarks drawn from history. There have been, indeed, periods of history in which the influence of the religious principle seems to have been overwhelmed; but in this it agrees with other great principles of our nature, which in certain stages of the race disappear. There are certain conditions of society, in which the desire of knowledge seems almost extinct among men, and they abandon themselves for centuries to brutish ignorance. There are communities, in which the natural desire of reaching a better lot gives not a sign of its existence, and society remains stationary for ages. There are some, in which even

the parental affection is so far dead, that the new-born child is cast into the stream or exposed to the storm. So the religious principle is in some periods hardly to be discerned; but it is never lost. No principle is more universally manifested. In the darkest ages there are some recognitions of a superior power. Man feels that there is a being above himself, and he clothes that being in what to his rude conception is great and venerable. In countries where architecture was unknown, men chose the solemn wood or the mountain top for worship; and when this art appeared, its monuments were temples to God. Before the invention of letters, hymns were composed to the Divinity; and music, we have reason to think, was the offspring of religion. Music in its infancy was the breathing of man's fears, wants, hopes, thanks, praises, to an unseen power. You tell me, my skeptical friend, that religion is the contrivance of the priest. How came the priest into being? What gave him his power? Why was it that the ancient legislator professed to receive his laws from the gods? The fact is a striking one, that the earliest guides and leaders of the human race looked to the heavens for security and strength to earthly institutions, that they were compelled to speak to men in a higher name than man's. Religion was an earlier bond and a deeper foundation of society than government. It was the root of civilization. It has founded the mightiest empires; and yet men question whether religion be an element, a principle of human nature!

In the earliest ages, before the dawn of science, man recognised an immediate interference of the Divinity in whatever powerfully struck his senses. To the savage the thunder was literally God's voice, the lightning his

arrow, the whirlwind his breath. Every unusual event was a miracle, a prodigy, a promise of good, or a menace of evil from Heaven. These rude notions have faded before the light of science, which reveals fixed laws, a stated order of nature. But in these laws, this order, the religious principle now finds confirmations of God, infinitely more numerous and powerful than the savage found in his prodigies. In this age of the world, there is a voice louder than thunder and whirlwinds, attesting the Divinity ; the voice of the wisely interpreted works of God, everywhere proclaiming wisdom unsearchable, harmony unbroken, and a benevolent purpose in what to ages of ignorance seemed ministers of wrath. In the present, above all times, worship may be said to have its foundation in our nature ; for by the improvements of this nature, we have placed ourselves nearer to God as revealed in his universe. The clouds which once hung over the creation are scattered. The heavens, the earth, the plant, the human frame, now that they are explored by science, speak of God as they never did before. His handwriting is brought out, where former ages saw but a blank. Nor is it only by the progress of science, that the foundation of religion is made broader and deeper. The progress of the arts, in teaching us the beneficent uses to which God's works may be applied, in extracting from them new comforts, and in diminishing or alleviating human suffering, has furnished new testimonies to the goodness of the Creator. Still more, the progress of society has given new power and delicacy to the sense of beauty in human nature, and in consequence of this, the creation of God has become a far more attractive, lovely, and magnificent work than men looked on in earlier times. Above all, the moral

susceptibilities and wants, the deeper and more refined feelings, which unfold themselves in the course of human improvement, are so many new capacities and demands for religion. Our nature is perpetually developing new senses for the perception and enjoyment of God. The human race, as it advances, does not leave religion behind it, as it leaves the shelter of caves and forests; does not outgrow faith, does not see it fading like the mist before its rising intelligence. On the contrary, religion opens before the improved mind in new grandeur. God, whom uncivilized man had narrowed into a local and tutelar Deity, rises with every advance of knowledge to a loftier throne, and is seen to sway a mightier sceptre. The soul, in proportion as it enlarges its faculties and refines its affections, possesses and discerns within itself a more and more glorious type of the Divinity, learns his spirituality in its own spiritual powers, and offers him a profounder and more inward worship. Thus deep is the foundation of worship in human nature. Men may assail it, may reason against it; but sooner can the laws of the outward universe be repealed by human will, sooner can the sun be plucked from his sphere, than the idea of God can be erased from the human spirit, and his worship banished from the earth. All other wants of man are superficial. His animal wants are but for a day, and are to cease with the body. The profoundest of all human wants is the want of God. Mind, spirit, must tend to its source. It cannot find happiness but in the perfect Mind, the Infinite Spirit. Worship has survived all revolutions. Corrupted, dishonored, opposed, it yet lives. It is immortal as its Object, immortal as the soul from which it ascends.

Let us rejoice, then, in this house. It is dedicated to

Worship; it can have no higher use. The heaven of heavens has no higher service or joy. The universe has no higher work. Its chief office is to speak of God. The sun in awakening innumerable forms of animal and vegetable life, exerts no influence to be compared with what it puts forth in kindling the human soul into piety, in being a type, representative, preacher of the glory of God.

II. I have now spoken of worship in the most general sense. I have said that this house, considered as separated to the adoration of God, should be entered joyfully and gratefully, without stopping to inquire under what particular views or forms, God is here to be adored. I now proceed to observe, that when we consider the particular worship which is here to be offered, this occasion ought to awaken pious joy. I need not tell you, that whilst the religious principle is a part of man's nature, it is not always developed and manifested under the same forms. Men, agreeing in the recognition of a Divinity, have not agreed as to the service he may accept. Indeed it seems inevitable, that men, who differ in judgment on all subjects of thought, should form different apprehensions of the invisible, infinite, and mysterious God, and of the methods of adoring him. Uniformity of opinion is to be found nowhere, and ought to be expected least of all in religion. Who, that considers the vast, the indescribable diversity in men's capacities and means of improvement, in the discipline to which they are subjected, in the schools in which they are trained, in the outward vicissitudes and inward conflicts through which they pass, can expect them to arrive at the same conclusions in regard to their origin and

destiny, in regard to the Being from whom they sprung, and the world toward which they tend. Accordingly, religion has taken innumerable forms, and some, it must be acknowledged, most unworthy of its objects. The great idea of God has been seized upon by men's selfish desires, hopes, and fears, and often so obscured that little of its purifying power has remained. Man, full of wants, conscious of guilt, exposed to suffering, and peculiarly struck by the more awful phenomena of nature, has been terror-smitten before the unseen, irresistible power with which he has felt himself encompassed. Hence to appease his wrath and to secure his partial regards, has been the great object of worship. Hence worship has been so often a pompous machinery, a tribute of obsequious adulation, an accumulation of gifts and victims. Hence worship has been the effort of nations and individuals, to bend the Almighty to their particular interests and purposes, and not the reverential, grateful, joyful, filial lifting up of the soul to Infinite Greatness, Goodness, Rectitude, and Purity. Even under Christianity human infirmity has disfigured the thought of God. Worship has been debased, by fear and selfishness, into a means of propitiating wrath, calming fear, and securing future enjoyment. All sects have carried their imperfection into their religion. None of us can boast of exemption from the common frailty. That this house is to be set apart to a perfect, spotless, unerring worship, none of us are so presumptuous as to hope. But I believe, that in the progress of society and Christianity, higher and purer conceptions of the Divinity have been unfolded; and I cannot but believe, that the views of God and of his worship to which this house is now consecrated, are so far enlightened, enlarged, purified, as to

justify us in entering its walls with great thankfulness and joy.

This house is not reared to perpetuate the superstitions of past ages nor of the present age. It is not reared to doom the worshipper to continual repetition of his own or other delusions. It is reared for the progress of truth, reared in the faith that the church is destined to new light and new purity, reared in the anticipation of a happier, holier age. As I look round, I am met by none of the representations of the Divinity, which degraded the ancient temples. My eyes light on no image of wood or stone, on no efforts of art to embody to the eye the invisible Spirit. As I look round, I am met by none of the forms, which Providence, in accommodation to a rude stage of society, allowed to the Jewish people. No altar sends up here the smoke of incense or victims. No priesthood, gorgeously arrayed, presents to God the material offerings of man. Nor are my eyes pained by cumbersome ceremonies, by which in later ages Christianity was overlaid, and almost overwhelmed. No childish pomps, borrowed from Judaism and Heathenism, obscure here the simple majesty, the sublime spiritual purpose of Christianity. Nor is this house reared for the promulgation of doctrines which tend to perpetuate the old servility with which God was approached, to make man abject in the sight of his Maker, to palsy him with terror, to prostrate his reason. This house is reared to assist the worshipper in conceiving and offering more and more perfectly the worship described in the text, the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth. On this topic, on the nature of the worship to be offered in this house, I have many reflections to offer. My illustrations may be reduced to the following heads: —

This house is reared, first, for the worship of One Infinite Person, and one only; of Him whom Jesus always distinguished and addressed as the Father. In the next place, it is erected for the worship of God under the special character of Father, that is of a Parental Divinity. In the last place, it is set apart to the worship of Him in Spirit and in Truth.

First, You have prepared this edifice, that here you may worship One Infinite Person, even Him and Him only whom Jesus continually calls the Father. One would think, that on this point there could be no difference among Christians. One would think, that Jesus had placed the Object of Christian worship beyond all dispute. It is hard to conceive more solemn, more definite language than he has used. "The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him." Yet it is well known, that very many Christians deny that one person, the Father, is the only proper object of supreme worship. They maintain that two other persons, the Son and the Holy Spirit, are to be joined with him in our adoration, and that the most important distinction of the Christian religion is the worship of God in three persons. Against this human exposition of Christianity we earnestly protest. Whilst we recognise with joy, the sincerity and piety of those who adopt it, we maintain that this gross departure from the simplicity and purity of our faith, is fraught with evil to the individual and the church. This house is reared to be a monument to the proper unity of God. We worship the Father.

All the grounds of this peculiarity of our worship, cannot of course be expounded in the limits of a dis-

course, nor indeed do we deem any labored exposition necessary. We start from a plain principle. We affirm, that if any point in a religious system must be brought out explicitly, must not be left to inference, but set forth in simple, direct, authoritative language, it is the Object of worship. On this point we should expect peculiar explicitness, if a revelation should be communicated for the purpose of giving a new direction to men's minds in this particular. Now, among Jews and Gentiles the worship of three infinite persons, one of whom was clothed with a human form, was unknown ; and, of consequence, if this strange, mighty innovation had been intended by Jesus and had constituted the most striking peculiarity of his system, it must have been announced with all possible clearness and strength. Be it then remembered, that Jesus, in a solemn description of the true worship which he was to introduce, made not an allusion to this peculiarity, but declared, as the characteristic to the true worshippers, that they should worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Be it also remembered, that Jesus never enjoined the worship of three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Not one injunction to this effect can be found in the Gospel or in the writings of the Apostles. This strange worship rests on inference alone. "The true worshippers (says the text) shall worship the Father." When his disciples came to him to be instructed in prayer, he taught them to say, Our Father. In his last affectionate discourse, he again and again taught his disciples to pray to the Father in his name. This dying injunction, so often and so tenderly repeated, should not for slight reasons be explained away. Still more, just before his death, Jesus himself, in presence of his disciples, prayed to the Father, and

prayed in this language : Father, This is life eternal, that they (*i. e.* men) should know *thee, the only true God,* and Jesus Christ whom *thou hast sent.*

To these remarks it is common to reply, that we read in the New Testament, that Jesus was again and again worshipped, and that in admitting this he manifested himself to be the object of religious adoration. It is wonderful that this fallacy, so often exposed, should be still repeated. Jesus indeed received worship or homage, but this was not offered as adoration to the Infinite God ; it was the homage which, according to the custom of the age and of the eastern world, was paid to men invested with great authority whether in civil or religious concerns. Whoever has studied the Scriptures with the least discernment must know, that the word, worship, is used in two different senses, to express, first, the adoration due to the Infinite Creator, and secondly, the reverence which was due to sovereigns and prophets, and which of course belonged peculiarly to the most illustrious representative of God, to his beloved Son. Whoever understands the import of the English language in the time when our translation was made, must know that the word was then used to express the homage paid to human superiors, as well as the supreme reverence belonging to God alone. Let not an ambiguous word darken the truth. We are sure, that the worship paid to Christ during his public ministry, was rendered to him as a divine messenger, and not as God ; for, in the first place, it was offered, before his teachings had been sufficiently full and distinct to reveal the mystery of his nature, supposing it to have been divine. We pronounce it not merely improbable but impossible, that Jesus, a poor man, a mechanic from Galilee, at the beginning of his

mission, when his chosen disciples were waiting for his manifestation as an earthly prince, should have been adored as the everlasting invisible God. Again, the titles given him by those who worshipped him, such as Good Teacher, Son of David, Son of God, show us, that the thought of adoring him as the Self-Existent, Infinite Divinity, had no place in their minds. But there is one consideration which sets this point at rest. The worship paid to Jesus during his ministry was offered him in public, in sight of the Jewish people. Now, to the Jews, no crime was so flagrant as the paying of divine homage to a human being, such as they esteemed Jesus to be. Of consequence, had they seen in the marks of honor yielded to Jesus, even an approach to this adoration, their exasperation would have burst forth in immediate overwhelming violence on the supposed impiety. The fact, that they witnessed the frequent prostration of men before Jesus, or what is called the worship of him, without once charging it as a crime, is a demonstration that the act was in no respect a recognition of him as the supreme God.

It is worthy of remark, that the passages which are announced as the strongest proofs of the divine worship of Christ, directly disprove the doctrine, if the connexion be regarded. One of these texts is the declaration of Jesus, that we must "honor the Son even as we honor the Father." Hear the whole passage: "The Father hath *given* all judgment to the Son, that all men should honor the Son, as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father *who sent him.*" * You observe, that it is not the supreme underived divinity of Christ, but the power given him by

* John v. 22, 23.

his Father, which is here expressly declared to be the foundation of the honor challenged for him, and that we are called to honor him, as sent by God. Another passage much relied on is the declaration of Paul, that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue acknowledge him Lord." Read the whole text: "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." * Could language express more clearly, the distinct, derived, and dependent nature of Jesus Christ, or teach that the worship due him is subordinate, having for its foundation the dignity conferred on him by God, and terminating on the Father as its supreme object.

This house, then, is erected to the supreme worship of the Father, to the recognition of the Father only as the self-existent Infinite God. Homage will here be paid to Jesus Christ, and, I trust, a far more profound and affectionate homage than he received on earth, when his spiritual character and the true purposes of his mission were almost unknown. But we shall honor him as the Son, the brightest image, the sent of God, not as God himself. We shall honor him as exalted above every name or dignity in heaven or earth, but as exalted by God for his obedience unto death. We shall honor him as clothed with power to give life, and judge, but shall remember that the Father hath given all judgment and quickening energy to the Son. We look up with delight and reverence to his divine virtues, his celestial love, his

* Philippians ii. 3.

truth, his spirit; and we are sure that in as far as we imbibe these from the affectionate remembrance of his life, death, and triumphs, we shall render the worship most acceptable to this disinterested friend of the human race.

I have said that this house is set apart to the worship of the Father. But this term expresses not only the Person, the Being to whom it is to be paid. It expresses a peculiar character. It ascribes peculiar attributes to God. It ascribes to him the Parental relation and the disposition of a Parent. I therefore observe, in the second place, that this house is reared to the adoration of God in his Paternal character. It is reared to a Parental Divinity. To my own mind this view is more affecting than the last. Nothing so touches me, when I look round these walls, as the thought that God is to be worshipped here as the Father. That God has not always been worshipped as a Father, even among Christians, you well know. Men have always inclined to think, that they honor God by placing him on a distant throne, much more than by investing him with the mild lustre of parental goodness. They have made him a stern sovereign, giving life on hard terms, preferring his own honor to the welfare of his creatures, demanding an obedience which he gives no strength to perform, preparing endless torments for creatures whom he brings into being wholly evil, and refusing to pardon the least sin, the sin of the child, without an infinite satisfaction. Men have too often been degraded, broken in spirit, stripped of manly feeling, rather than lifted up to true dignity, by their religion. How seldom has worship breathed the noblest sentiments of human nature!

Thanks to Jesus Christ, that he came to bring us to a purifying, ennobling, rejoicing adoration. He has revealed the Father. His own character was a bright revelation of the most lovely and attractive attributes of the Divinity, so that he was able to say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." By his manifestation of the Parental character of God, he created religion anew. He breathed a new and heavenly spirit into worship. He has made adoration a filial communion, assimilating us to our Creator. Ought we not, then, to rejoice in this house as set apart to the worship of the Father, to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

The Father! In this one word what consoling, strengthening, ennobling truth is wrapped up. In this single view of God, how much is there to bind us to him, with strong, indissoluble, ever-growing love, and to make worship not only our chief duty, but our highest privilege and joy. The Father! can it be, that "the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity," "the Lord of heaven and earth," the Majesty of the universe, bears to us this relation, reveals himself under this name, and that we, so weak and erring, may approach him with the hope of children! Who cannot comprehend the dignity and blessedness of such worship? Who does not feel, that the man, to whom God's parental character is a deep-felt reality, has in this conviction a fountain of strength, hope, and purity springing up into everlasting life?

But to offer this true worship, we must understand distinctly what we mean, when we call God the Father. The word has a deep and glorious import, and in as far as this is unknown, religion will want life and power

Is it understood? I am bound to say, that there seems to me a want of purity, of spirituality in the conception of God's parental relation, even among those Christians who profess to make it the great foundation and object of their worship. Too many rest in vague conceptions of God as their Creator, who supplies their wants, and who desires their happiness, and they think, that, thus regarding him, they know the Father. Such imperfect views incline me to state at some length what I deem the truth on this point. No truth is so essential to Christian worship. No truth sheds such a flood of light on the whole subject of religion.

My friends, you are to come here to worship the Father. What does this term import? It does not mean merely that God is your Creator. He is indeed the Creator, and as such let him be adored. This is his sole prerogative. His and his only is the mysterious power, which filled the void space with a universe. His the Almighty voice, which called the things which were not, and they came forth. The universe is a perpetual answer to this creating Word. For this, worship God. In every thing hear an exhortation to adore. In the grandeur, beauty, order of nature, see a higher glory than its own, a mysterious force deeper than all its motions; and from its countless voices, from its mild and awful tones, gather the one great lesson which they conspire to teach, the majesty of their Author.

But, my friends, God is more than Creator. To create is not to be a Father in the highest sense of that term. He created the mountain, the plant, the insect, but we do not call him their father. We do not call the artist the father of the statue which he models, nor the *mechanician* the father of the machine he contrives. It

is the distinction of a father, that he communicates an existence like his own. The father gives being to the child, and the very idea of the child is, that he bears the image as well as receives existence from the power of the parent. God is the Father, because he brings into life minds, spirits, partaking of energies kindred to his own attributes. Accordingly the Scripture teaches us, that God made man in his own image, after his own likeness. Here is the ground of his paternal relation to the human race, and hence he is called in an especial sense the Father of those who make it the labor of life to conform themselves more and more to their divine original. God is "the Father of spirits."

My friends, we are not wholly matter, we are not wholly flesh. Were we so, we could not call God our Father. God is a spirit, says the text, and we are spirits also. This our consciousness teaches. We are conscious of a principle superior to the body which comprehends and controls it. We are conscious of faculties higher than the senses. We do something more than receive impressions passively, unresistingly, like the brute, from the outward world. We analyze, compare, and combine anew the things which we see, subject the outward world to the inquisition of reason, create sciences, rise to general laws, and through these establish an empire over earth and sea. We penetrate beneath the surface which the senses report; search for the hidden causes, inquire for the ends or purposes, trace out the connexions, dependencies, and harmonies of nature; discover a sublime unity amidst its boundless variety, and order amidst its seeming confusion; rise to the idea of one all-comprehending and all-ordaining Mind; and thus by thought make as it were a new

universe radiant with wisdom, beneficence, and beauty. We are not mere creatures of matter and sense. We conceive a higher good than comes from the senses. We possess, as a portion of our being, a law higher than appetite, nobler and more enduring than all the laws of matter, the Law of Duty. We discern, we approve, the Right, the Good, the Just, the Holy, and by this sense of rectitude are laid under obligations, which no power of the outward universe can dissolve. We have within us a higher force than all the forces of material nature, a power of will which can adhere to duty and to God in opposition to all the might of the elements, and all the malignity of earth or hell. We have thoughts, ideas, which do not come from matter, the Ideas of the Infinite, the Everlasting, the Immutable, the Perfect. Living amidst the frail, the limited, the changing, we rise to the thought of Unbounded, Eternal, Almighty Goodness. Nor is this all. While matter obeys mechanical and irresistible laws, and is bound by an unrelaxing necessity to the same fixed, unvarying movements, we feel ourselves to be Free. We have power over ourselves, over thought and desire, power to conform ourselves to a law written on our hearts, and power to resist this law. Man must never be confounded with the material, mechanical world around him. He is a spirit. He has capacities, thoughts, impulses, which assimilate him to God. His reason is a ray of the Infinite Reason; his conscience, an oracle of the Divinity, publishing the Everlasting Law of Rectitude. Therefore God is his Father. Therefore he is bound to his Maker by a spiritual bond. This we must feel, or we know nothing of the parental relation of God to the human race.

God is the Father, and as such let him be worshipped. He is the Father. By this I understand that he has given being not only to worlds of matter, but to a rational, moral, spiritual universe, and still more I understand, not only that he has created a spiritual family in heaven and on earth, but that he manifests towards them the attributes and exerts on them the influences of a Father. Some of these attributes and influences I will suggest, that the parental character in which God is to be worshipped may be more distinctly apprehended and more deeply felt.

First, then, in calling God the Father, I understand that he loves his rational and moral offspring with unbounded affection. Love is the fundamental attribute of a Father. How deep, strong, tender, enduring the attachment of a human parent! But this shadows forth feebly the Divine Parent. He loves us with an energy like that with which he upholds the universe. The human parent does not comprehend his child, cannot penetrate the mystery of the spiritual nature which lies hid beneath the infant form. It is the prerogative of God alone, to understand the immortal mind to which he gives life. The narrowest human spirit can be comprehended in its depths and destiny by none but its Maker, and is more precious in his sight than material worlds. Is he not peculiarly its Father?

Again, in calling God the Father, I understand that it is his chief purpose in creating and governing the universe, to educate, train, form, and ennoble the rational and moral being to whom he has given birth. Education is the great work of a parent, and he who neglects it is unworthy the name. God gives birth to the mind, that it may grow and rise for ever, and its pro-

gress is the end of all his works. This outward universe, with its sun and stars, and mighty revolutions, is but a school in which the Father is training his children. God is ever present to the human mind to carry on its education, pouring in upon it instruction and incitement from the outward world, stirring up everlasting truth within itself, rousing it to activity by pleasure and pain, calling forth its affections by surrounding fellow-creatures, calling it to duty by placing it amidst various relations, awakening its sympathy by sights of sorrow, awakening its imagination by a world of beauty, and especially exposing it to suffering, hardship, and temptation, that by resistance it may grow strong, and by seeking help from above, it may bind itself closely to its Maker. Thus he is the Father. There are those who think, that God, if a parent, must make our enjoyment his supreme end. He has a higher end, our intellectual and moral education. Even the good human parent desires the progress, the virtue of his child more than its enjoyment. God never manifests himself more as our Father, than in appointing to us pains, conflicts, trials, by which we may rise to the heroism of virtue, may become strong to do, to dare, to suffer, to sacrifice all things at the call of truth and duty.

Again, in calling God a Father, I understand that he exercises authority over his rational offspring. Authority is the essential attribute of a father. A parent, worthy of that name, embodies and expresses both in commands and actions, the everlasting law of Duty. His highest function is to bring out in the minds of his children the idea of Right, and to open to them the perfection of their nature. It is too common a notion, that God, as Father, must be more disposed to bless

than to command. His commands are among his chief blessings. He never speaks with more parental kindness than by that inward voice, which teaches duty and excites and cheers to its performance. Nothing is so strict, so inflexible in enjoining the right and the good, as perfect love. This can endure no moral stain in its object. The whole experience of life, rightly construed, is a revelation of God's parental authority and righteous retribution.

Again. When I call God the Father, I understand that he communicates Himself, his own spirit, what is most glorious in his own nature to his rational offspring; a doctrine almost overwhelming by its grandeur, but yet true, and the very truth which shines most clearly from the Christian Scriptures. It belongs to a parent to breathe into the child whatever is best and loftiest in his own soul, and for this end a good father seeks every approach to the mind of the child. Such a father is God. He has created us not only to partake of his works, but to be "partakers of a divine nature," not only to receive his gifts, but to receive Himself. As he is a pure spirit, he has an access to the minds of his children, not enjoyed by human parents. He pervades, penetrates our souls. All other beings, our nearest friends, are far from us, foreign to us, strangers, compared with God. Others hold intercourse with us through the body. He is in immediate contact with our souls. We do not discern him because he is too near, too inward, too deep to be recognised by our present imperfect consciousness. And he is thus near, not only to discern, but to act, to influence, to give his spirit, to communicate to us divinity. This is the great paternal gift of God. He has greater gifts than the world. He confers more than the

property of the earth and heavens. The very attributes from which the earth and heavens sprung, these he imparts to his rational offspring. Even his disinterested, impartial, universal goodness, which diffuses beauty, life, and happiness, even this excellence it is his purpose to breathe into and cherish in the human soul. In regard to the spiritual influence, by which God brings the created spirit into conformity to his own, I would that I could speak worthily. It is gentle, that it may not interfere with our freedom. It sustains, mingles with, and moves all our faculties. It acts through nature, providence, revelation, society, and experience ; and the Scriptures, confirmed by reason and the testimonies of the wisest and best men, teach us, that it acts still more directly. God, being immediately present to the soul, holds immediate communion with it, in proportion as it prepares itself to receive and to use aright the heavenly inspiration. He opens the inward eye to himself, communicates secret monitions of duty, revives and freshens our convictions of truth, builds up our faith in human immortality, unseals the deep, unfathomed fountains of Love within us, instils strength, peace, and comfort, and gives victory over pain, sin, and death.

This influence of God, exerted on the soul to conform it to himself, to make it worthy of its divine parentage, this it is which most clearly manifests what is meant by his being our Father. We understand his parental relation to us, only as far as we comprehend this great purpose and exercise of his love. We must have faith in the human soul as receptive of the divinity, as made for greatness, for spiritual elevation, for likeness to God, or God's character as a Father will be to us as an unrevealed mystery. If we think, as so many seem to think,

that God has made us only for low pleasures and attainments, that our nature is incapable of godlike virtues, that our prayers for the Divine Spirit are unheard, that celestial influences do not descend into the human soul, that God never breathes on it to lift it above its present weakness, to guide it to a more perfect existence, to unite it more intimately with himself, then we know but faintly the meaning of a Father in Heaven. The great revelation in Christianity of a Paternal Divinity, is still to be made to us.

I might here pause in the attempt to give distinct conceptions of the Father whom we are to worship; but there are two views so suited to us, as sinful and mortal beings, that I cannot pass them over without brief notice. Let me add, then, that in speaking of God as the Father, I understand, that he looks with overflowing compassion on such of his rational offspring as forsake him, as forsake the law of duty. It is the property of the human parent to follow with yearnings of tenderness an erring child; and in this he is a faint type of God, who sees his lost sons "a great way off," who to recover his human family spared not his beloved Son, who sends his regenerating spirit into the fallen soul, sends rebuke, and shame, and fear, and sorrow, and awakens the dead in trespasses and sins, to a higher life than that which the first birth conferred.

I also understand, in calling God the Father, that he destines his rational, moral creature to Immortality. How ardently does the human parent desire to prolong the life of his child. And how much more must He, who gave being to the spirit with its unbounded faculties, desire its endless being. God is our Father, for he has made us to bear the image of his own eternity as well as

of his other attributes. Other things pass away, for they fulfil their end ; but the soul, which never reaches its goal, whose developement is never complete, is never to disappear from the universe. God created it to receive for ever of his fulness. His fatherly love is not exhausted in what he now bestows. There *is* a higher life. Human perfection is not a dream. The brightest visions of genius fade before the realities of excellence and happiness to which good men are ordained. In that higher life, the parental character of God will break forth from the clouds which now obscure it. His bright image in his children will proclaim the Infinite Father.

I have thus, my friends, set before you the true object of Christian worship. You are here to worship God as your spiritual parent, as the Father of your spirits, whose great purpose is your spiritual perfection, your participation of a divine nature. I hold this view of God to be the true, deep foundation of Christian worship. On your reception of it depends the worth of the homage to be offered here. It is not enough to think of God as operating around and without you, as creating material worlds, as the former of your bodies, as ordaining the revolution of seasons for your animal wants. There is even danger in regarding God exclusively as the author of the outward universe. There is danger, lest you feel as if you were overlooked in this immensity, lest you shrink before these mighty masses of matter, lest you see in the unchangeable laws of nature, a stern order to which the human being is a victim, and which heeds not the puny individual in maintaining the general good. It is only by regarding God as more than Creator, as your spiritual Father, as having made you to partake of his spiritual attributes, as having given

you a spiritual power worth more than the universe, it is only by regarding his intimacy with the soul, his paternal concern for it, his perpetual influence on it, it is only by these views that worship rises into filial confidence, hope, joy, and rapture, and puts forth a truly ennobling power. Worship has too often been abject, the offering of fear or selfishness. God's greatness, though a pledge of greatness to his children, and his omnipotence, though an assurance to us of mighty power in our conflict with evil, have generated self-contempt and discouraged access to him. My friends, come hither to worship God as your Spiritual Father. No other view can so touch and penetrate the soul, can place it so near its Maker, can open before it such vast prospects, can awaken such transports of praise and gratitude, can bow the soul in such ingenuous sorrow for sin, can so fortify you for the conflict against evil. Ought we not to rejoice that this house is reared for the worship of the spiritual Father?

The exposition which I have given under this head, of the parental relation of God to the human race, is one in which I take the deepest interest. I have felt, however, as I proceeded, that very possibly objections would spring up in the minds of some who hear me. There are not a few who are skeptical as to whatever supposes a higher condition of human nature than they now observe. Perhaps some here, could they speak, would say, "We do not see the marks of this fatherly interest of God in man of which you have spoken. We do not see in man the signs of a being so beloved, so educated, as you have supposed. His weakness, sufferings, and sins, are surely no proofs of his having been created to receive God's spirit, to partake of the divini-

ty." On this point I have much to say, but my answer must be limited to a few words. I reply, that the love of an Infinite Father may be expected often to work in methods beyond the comprehension of our limited minds. An immortal being in his infancy cannot of course comprehend all the processes of his education, many of which look forward to ages too distant for the imagination to explore. I would add, that notwithstanding the darkness which hangs over human life on account of the greatness of our nature, we can yet see bright signatures of the parental concern of God, and see them in the very circumstances which at first create doubt. Because we suffer, it ought not to be inferred that God is not a Father. Suffering, trial, exposure, seem to be necessary elements in the education of a moral being. It is fit, that a being whose happiness and dignity are to be found in vigorous action and in forming himself, should be born with undeveloped capacities, and be born into a world of mingled difficulties and aids. We do see, that energy of thought, will, affection, virtue, the energy which is our true life and joy, often springs from trial. We can see, too, that it is well that society, like the individual, should begin in imperfection; because men in this way become to each other means of discipline, because joint sufferings and the necessity of joint efforts awaken both the affections and the faculties, because occasion and incitement are thus given to generous sacrifices, to heroic struggles, to the most beautiful and stirring manifestations of philanthropy, patriotism, and devotion. Were I called on to prove God's spiritual parental interest in us, I would point to the trials, temptations, evils of life; for to these we owe the character of Christ, we owe the apostle and martyr, we owe

the moral force and deep sympathy of private and domestic life, we owe the devolopement of what is divine in human nature. Truly God is our Father, and as such to be worshipped.

Having thus set forth very imperfectly, but from a full heart, the excellence of the homage which is here to be rendered to God in his Parental character, I ought now to proceed, according to the plan of this discourse, to show that we should enter this house with joy, because it is set apart to the worship of God in Spirit and in Truth, to an Inward not outward worship. In discussing this topic, I might enlarge on the vast and beneficent revolution which Jesus Christ wrought in religion, by teaching that God is a spirit, and to be spiritually adored. I might show how much he wrought for human elevation and happiness, when, in pronouncing the text, he shook the ancient temples to their foundations, quenched the fire on the heathen and Jewish altars, wrested the instruments of sacrifice from the hand of the priest, abolished sanctity of place, and consecrated the human soul as the true house of God. But the nature, grandeur, benefits of this spiritual worship, are subjects too extensive for our present consideration. Instead of discussion, I can only use the words of exhortation. I can only say, that you, who are to assemble in this place, are peculiarly bound to inward worship, for to you especially Christianity is an inward system. Most other denominations expect salvation more or less from what Jesus does abroad, especially from his agency on the mind of God. You expect it from what he does within your own minds. His great glory, according to your views, lies in his

influence on the human soul, in the communication of his spirit to his followers. To you salvation, heaven, and hell have their seat in the soul. To you, Christianity is wholly a spiritual system. Come, then, to this place to worship with the soul, to elevate the spirit to God. Let not this house be desecrated by a religion of show. Let it not degenerate into a place of forms. Let not your pews be occupied by lifeless machines. Do not come here to take part in lethargic repetitions of sacred words. Do not come from a cold sense of duty, to quiet conscience with the thought of having paid a debt to God. Do not come to perform a present task to insure a future heaven. Come to find heaven now, to anticipate the happiness of that better world by breathing its spirit, to bind your souls indissolubly to your Maker. Come to worship in spirit and in truth, that is, intelligently, rationally, with clear judgment, with just and honorable conceptions of the Infinite Father, not prostrating your understandings, not renouncing the divine gift of reason, but offering an enlightened homage, such as is due to the Fountain of intelligence and truth. — Come to worship with the heart as well as intellect, with life, fervor, zeal. Sleep over your business if you will, but not over your religion. — Come to worship with strong conviction, with living faith in a higher presence than meets the eye, with a feeling of God's presence not only around you, but in the depths of your souls. — Come to worship with a filial spirit, not with fear, dread, and gloom; not with sepulchral tones and desponding looks, but with humble, cheerful, boundless trust, with overflowing gratitude, with a love willing and earnest to do and to suffer whatever may approve your devotion to God. — Come to worship him

with what he most delights in, with aspiration for spiritual light and life; come to cherish and express desires for virtue, for purity, for power over temptation, stronger and more insatiable than spring up in your most eager pursuits of business or pleasure; and welcome joyfully every holy impulse, every accession of strength to virtuous purpose, to the love of God and man. — In a word, come to offer a refined, generous worship, to offer a tribute worthy of Him who is the Perfection of truth, goodness, beauty, and blessedness. Adore him with the calmest reason and the profoundest love, and strive to conform yourselves to what you adore.

I have now, my friends, set before you the worship to which this building is set apart, and which, from its rational, filial, pure, and ennobling character, renders this solemnity a season for thankfulness and joy. I should not however be just to this occasion, or to the great purpose of this house, if I were to stop here. My remarks have hitherto been confined to the worship which is to be offered within these walls, to the influence to be exerted on you when assembled here. But has this house no higher end than to give an impulse to your minds for the very few hours which you are to spend beneath its roof? Then we have little reason to enter it with joy. The great end for which you are to worship here is, that you may worship everywhere. You are to feel God's presence here, that it may be felt wherever you go, and whatever you do. The very idea of spiritual homage is, that it takes possession of the soul, and becomes a part of our very being. The great design of this act of dedication is, that your houses, your places of business, may be consecrated to God.

This topic of omnipresent worship I cannot expand. One view of it, however, I must not omit. From the peculiar character of the worship to which this house is consecrated, you learn the *kind* of worship which you should carry from it into your common lives. It is not uncommon for the Christian teacher to say to his congregation, that, when they leave the church, they go forth into a nobler temple than one made with hands, into the temple of the Creation, and that they must go forth to worship God in his works. The views given of the true worship in this discourse, will lead me to a somewhat different style of exposition. I will, indeed, say to you, go from this house to adore God as he is revealed in the boundless universe. This is one end of your worship here. But I would add, that a higher end is, that you should go forth to worship him as he is revealed in his rational and moral offspring, and to worship him by fulfilling, as you have power, his purposes in regard to these. My great aim in this discourse has been to show, that God is to be adored here as the Father of rational and moral beings, of yourselves and all mankind; and such a worship tends directly and is designed to lead us, when we go hence, to recognise God in our own nature, to see in men his children, to respect and serve them, for their relationship to the Divinity, to see in them signatures of greatness amidst all their imperfection, and to love them with more than earthly love. We must not look round on the universe with awe and on man with scorn; for man, who can comprehend the universe and its laws, "is greater than the universe, which cannot comprehend itself." God dwells in every human being more intimately than in the outward creation. The voice of God comes to us in

the ocean, the thunder, the whirlwind; but how much more of God is there in his inward voice, in the intuitions of reason, in the rebukes of conscience, in the whispers of the Holy Spirit. I would have you see God in the awful mountain and the tranquil valley; but more, much more in the clear judgment, the moral energy, the disinterested purpose, the pious gratitude, the immortal hope of a good man. Go from this house to worship God by reverencing the human soul as his chosen sanctuary. Revere it in yourselves, revere it in others, and labor to carry it forward to perfection. Worship God within these walls, as universally, impartially good to his human offspring; and go forth to breathe the same spirit. Go forth to respect the rights, and seek the true, enduring welfare of all within your influence. Carry with you the conviction, that to trample on a human being, of whatever color, clime, rank, condition, is to trample on God's child; that to degrade or corrupt a man, is to deface a holier temple than any material sanctuary. Mercy, Love, is more acceptable worship to God, than all sacrifices or outward offerings. The most celestial worship ever paid on earth was rendered by Christ, when he approached man, and the most sinful man, as a child of God, when he toiled and bled to awaken what was Divine in the human soul, to regenerate a fallen world. Be such the worship which you shall carry from this place. Go forth to do good with every power which God bestows, to make every place you enter happier by your presence, to espouse all human interests, to throw your whole weight into the scale of human freedom and improvement, to withstand all wrong, to uphold all right, and especially to give light, life, strength to the immortal soul. He who rears up one child in Christian virtue, or recovers one

fellow-creature to God, builds a temple more precious than Solomon's or St. Peter's, more enduring than earth or heaven.

I have now finished the general discussion which this occasion seemed to me to require, and I trust that a few remarks of a personal and local character will be received with indulgence. It is with no common emotion that I take part in the present solemnity. I stand now to teach, where in my childhood and youth I was a learner. The generation which I then knew has almost wholly disappeared. The venerable man, whose trembling voice I then heard in this place, has long since gone to his reward. My earliest friends, who watched over my childhood and led me by the hand to this spot, have been taken. Still my emotions are not sad. I rejoice; for whilst I see melancholy changes around me, and still more feel, that time, which has bowed other frames, has touched my own, I see that the work of human improvement has gone on. I see that clearer and brighter truths, than were opened on my own youthful mind, are to be imparted to succeeding generations. Herein I do and will rejoice.

On looking back to my early years, I can distinctly recollect unhappy influences exerted on my mind by the general tone of religion in this town. I can recollect, too, a corruption of morals among those of my own age, which made boyhood a critical, perilous season. Still I must bless God for the place of my nativity; for as my mind unfolded, I became more and more alive to the beautiful scenery which now attracts strangers to our island. My first liberty was used in roaming over the neighbouring fields and shores; and amid this glorious

nature, that love of liberty sprang up, which has gained strength within me to this hour. I early received impressions of the great and the beautiful, which I believe have had no small influence in determining my modes of thought and habits of life. In this town I pursued for a time my studies of theology. I had no professor or teacher to guide me; but I had two noble places of study. One was yonder beautiful edifice, now so frequented and so useful as a public library, then so deserted that I spent day after day and sometimes week after week amidst its dusty volumes, without interruption from a single visitor. The other place was yonder beach, the roar of which has so often mingled with the worship of this place, my daily resort, dear to me in the sunshine, still more attractive in the storm. Seldom do I visit it now without thinking of the work, which there, in the sight of that beauty, in the sound of those waves, was carried on in my soul. No spot on earth has helped to form me so much as that beach. There I lifted up my voice in praise amidst the tempest. There, softened by beauty, I poured out my thanksgiving and contrite confessions. There, in reverential sympathy with the mighty power around me, I became conscious of power within. There struggling thoughts and emotions broke forth, as if moved to utterance by nature's eloquence of the winds and waves. There began a happiness surpassing all worldly pleasures, all gifts of fortune, the happiness of communing with the works of God. Pardon me this reference to myself. I believe that the worship, of which I have this day spoken, was aided in my own soul by the scenes in which my early life was passed. Amidst these scenes, and in speaking of this worship, allow me to

thank God that this beautiful island was the place of my birth.

Leaving what is merely personal, I would express my joy, and it is most sincere, in the dedication of this house, regarded as a proof and a means of the diffusion of Christian truth. Some perhaps may think, that this joy is not a little heightened by seeing a church set apart to the particular sect to which I am said to belong. But I trust, that what you have this day heard will satisfy most if not all who hear, that it is not a sectarian exultation to which I am giving utterance. I indeed take pleasure in thinking, that the particular views which I have adopted of the disputed doctrines of religion, will here be made known; but I rejoice much more in thinking, that this house is pledged to no peculiar doctrines, that it is not erected to bind my own or any man's opinions on this or on future times, that it is consecrated to free investigation of religious truth, to religious progress, to the right of private judgment, to Protestant and Christian liberty. Most earnestly do I pray, that a purer theology, that diviner illuminations, that a truer worship than can now be found in our own or in any sect, may be the glory of this house. We who now consecrate it to God, believe in human progress. We do not say to the spirit of truth, "Thus far and no farther." We reprobate the exclusive, tyrannical spirit of the churches of this age, which denounce as an enemy to Christianity, whoever in the use of his intellectual liberty, and in the interpretation of God's word for himself, may differ from the traditions and creeds which have been received from fallible forefathers. We rear these walls not to a sect, but to religious, moral, intellectual, Protestant, Christian liberty.

I rejoice that this temple of liberty is opened on this spot. I feel that this town has a right to an establishment, in which conscientious Christians may inquire and speak without dreading the thunders of excommunication, in which Protestanism will not be dishonored by the usurpations of the Romish Church. This island, like the State to which it belongs, was originally settled by men who came hither for liberty of conscience, and in assertion of the right to interpret for themselves the word of God. Religious freedom was the very principle on which this town was founded, and I rejoice to know, that the spirit of religious freedom has never wanted champions here. I have recently read a very valuable discourse, which was delivered in this town about a century ago, and just a century after the cession of this island to our fathers by the Indians, and which breathes a liberality of thought and feeling, a reverence for the rights of the understanding and the conscience, very rare at that time in other parts of the country, and very far from being universal now. Its author, the Rev. Mr. Callender, was pastor of the first Baptist church in this place, the oldest of our churches, and it was dedicated to a descendant of the venerable Coddington, our first Governor. The spirit of religious liberty which pervades this discourse, has astonished as well as rejoiced me, and it should thrill the hearts of this people. Let me read a few sentences :—

"It must be a mean contracted way of thinking, to confine the favor of God, and the power of godliness, to one set of speculative opinions, or any particular external forms of worship. How hard must it be to imagine, that all other Christians but ourselves, must be formal, and hypocritical, and destitute of the grace of God,

because their education or capacity differs from ours, or that God has given them more or less light than to us; though we cannot deny, they give the proper evidence of their fearing God by their working righteousness, and show their love to him by keeping what they understand he has commanded; and though their faith in Christ Jesus purifies their hearts and works by love and overcomes the world. It would be hard to show, why liberty of conscience, mutual forbearance and good will, why brotherly kindness and charity is not as good a centre of unity as a constrained uniformity in external ceremonies, or a forced subscription to ambiguous articles. Experience has dearly convinced the world that unanimity in judgment and affection cannot be secured by penal law. Who can tell, why the unity of spirit in the bonds of peace is not enough for Christians to aim at? And who can assign a reason why they may not love one another though abounding in their own several senses? And why if they live in peace, the God of love and peace may not be with them?

"There is no other bottom but this to rest upon, to leave others the liberty we should desire ourselves, the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free."

Such was the liberal spirit expressed in this town a hundred years ago. I would it were more common in our own day.

Another noble friend of religious liberty threw a lustre on this island immediately before the revolution. I mean the Rev. Dr. Stiles, pastor of the Second Congregational Church, and afterwards President of Yale College. This country has not perhaps produced a more learned man. To enlarged acquaintance with physical science he added extensive researches into philology, history, and

antiquities; nor did his indefatigable mind suffer any opportunity to escape him, of adding to his rich treasures of knowledge. His virtues were proportioned to his intellectual acquisition. I can well remember how his name was cherished among his parishioners, after years of separation. His visit to this place was to many a festival. When little more than a child, I was present at some of his private meetings with the more religious part of his former congregation; and I recollect how I was moved by the tears and expressive looks with which his affectionate exhortations were received. In his faith he was what was called a moderate Calvinist; but his heart was of no sect. He carried into his religion the spirit of liberty which then stirred the whole country. Intolerance, church-tyranny in all its forms, he abhorred. He respected the right of private judgment, where others would have thought themselves authorized to restrain it. A young man, to whom he had been as a father, one day communicated to him doubts concerning the Trinity. He expressed his sorrow; but mildly, and with undiminished affection told him to go to the Scriptures, and to seek his faith there and only there. His friendships were confined to no parties. He desired to heal the wounds of the divided church of Christ, not by a common creed, but by the spirit of love. He wished to break every yoke, civil and ecclesiastical, from men's necks. To the influence of this distinguished man in the circle in which I was brought up, I may owe in part the indignation which I feel towards every invasion of human rights. In my earliest years, I regarded no human being with equal reverence. I have his form before me at this moment almost as distinctly as if I had seen him yesterday, so strong is the

impression made on the child through the moral affections.

Let me add one more example of the spirit of religious freedom on this island. You may be surprised, perhaps, when you hear me name in this connexion the venerable man, who once ministered in this place, the Rev. Dr. Hopkins. His name is indeed associated with a stern and appalling theology, and it is true, that he wanted toleration towards those who rejected his views. Still in forming his religious opinions, he was superior to human authority; he broke away from human creeds; he interpreted God's word for himself; he revered reason, the oracle of God within him. His system, however fearful, was yet built on a generous foundation. He maintained that all holiness, all moral excellence, consists in benevolence, or disinterested devotion to the greatest good; that this is the character of God; that love is the only principle of the divine administration. He taught that sin was introduced into the creation, and is to be everlastingly punished, because evil is necessary to the highest good. To this government, in which the individual is surrendered to the well-being of the whole, he required entire and cheerful submission. Other Calvinists were willing that their neighbours should be predestined to everlasting misery for the glory of God. This noble-minded man demanded a more generous and impartial virtue, and maintained that we should consent to our own perdition, should be willing ourselves to be condemned, if the greatest good of the universe, and the manifestation of the divine perfections should so require. True virtue, as he taught, was an entire surrender of personal interest to the benevolent purposes of God. Self-love he spared in none of its movements

He called us to seek our own happiness as well as that of others, in a spirit of impartial benevolence; to do good to ourselves, not from self-preference, not from the impulse of personal desires, but in obedience to that sublime law, which requires us to promote the welfare of each and all within our influence. I need not be ashamed to confess the deep impression which this system made on my youthful mind. I am grateful to this stern teacher for turning my thoughts and heart to the claims and majesty of impartial, universal benevolence. From such a man, a tame acquiescence in the established theology was not to be expected. He indeed accepted the doctrine of predestination in its severest form; but in so doing, he imagined himself a disciple of reason as well as of revelation. He believed this doctrine to be sustained by profound metaphysical argumentation, and to rest on the only sound philosophy of the human mind, so that in receiving it, he did not abandon the ground of reason. In accordance with his free spirit of inquiry, we find him making not a few important modifications of Calvinism. The doctrine that we are liable to punishment for the sin of our first parent, he wholly rejected; and not satisfied with denying the imputation of Adam's guilt to his posterity, he subverted what the old theology had set forth as the only foundation of divine acceptance, namely the imputation of Christ's righteousness or merits to the believer. The doctrine that Christ died for the elect only, found no mercy at his hands. He taught that Christ suffered equally for all mankind. The system of Dr. Hopkins was indeed an effort of reason to reconcile Calvinism with its essential truths. Accordingly his disciples were sometimes called, and willingly called, Rational Calvin-

ists. The impression which he made was much greater than is now supposed. The churches of New England received a decided impression from his views; and though his name, once given to his followers, is no longer borne, his influence is still felt. The conflict now going on in our country, for the purpose of mitigating the harsh features of Calvinism, is a stage of the revolutionary movement to which he more than any man gave impulse. *I* can certainly bear witness to the spirit of progress and free inquiry which possessed him. In my youth, I preached in this house at the request of the venerable old man. As soon as the services were closed, he turned to me with an animated benignant smile, and using a quaintness of expression which I need not repeat, said to me, that theology was still imperfect, and that he hoped I should live to carry it towards perfection. Rare and most honorable liberality in the leader of a sect! He wanted not to secure a follower, but to impel a young mind to higher truth. I feel, that ability has not been given me to accomplish this generous hope; but such quickening language from such lips, though it could not give strength, might kindle desire, and elevate exertion. — Thus the spirit of religious freedom has not been wanting to this island. May this spirit, unawed by human reproach, unfettered by human creeds, availing itself gratefully of human aids, and, above all, looking reverently to God for light, dwell in the hearts of those who are to minister, and of those who shall worship within these walls. May this spirit spread far and wide, and redeem the Christian world from the usurpations of Catholic and Protestant infallibility, from uncharitableness, intolerance, per-

secution, and every yoke which has crushed the human soul.

I have done with the personal and the local. In conclusion, let me revert for one moment to the great topic of this discourse. My friends, the spiritual worship of which I have this day spoken, is something *real*. There *is* a worship in the spirit, a worship very different from standing in the church, or kneeling in the closet, a worship which cannot be confined to set phrases, and asks not the clothing of outwards forms, a thirst of the soul for its Creator, an inward voice, which our nearest neighbour cannot hear, but which pierces the skies. To the culture of this spiritual worship, we dedicate this house. My friends, rest not in offering breath, in moving the lips, in bending the knee to your Creator. There is another, a nearer, a happier intercourse with Heaven, a worship of love, sometimes too full and deep for utterance, a union of mind with him closer than earthly friendships. This is the worship to which Christ calls. Christ came not to build churches, not to rear cathedrals with Gothic arches, or swelling domes, but to dedicate the human soul to God. When God "bows the heavens and comes down," it is not that he may take up his abode beneath the vault of a metropolitan temple; it is not that he is drawn by majestic spires or by clouds of fragrance, but that he may visit and dwell in the humble, obedient, disinterested soul. This house is to moulder away. Temples hewn from the rock will crumble to dust, or melt in the last fire. But the inward temple will survive all outward change. When winds and oceans and suns shall have ceased to praise God, the human soul will praise

him. It will receive more and more divine inspirations of truth and love; will fill with its benevolent ministry wider and wider spheres; and will accomplish its destiny by a progress towards God as unlimited, as mysterious, as enduring as eternity.

NOTE TO PAGE 317.

I have not quoted the verses preceding those which I have extracted from the Epistle to the Philippians, which are often adduced in proof of Christ's supreme divinity, because it is acknowledged by learned men of all denominations, that our translation of the most important clause is incorrect, and a critical discussion of the subject would have been out of place. I think, however, that no man, unacquainted with the common theories, can read any translation and escape the impression, that Jesus Christ is a derived, dependent, subordinate being, and a distinct being from the Father. How plain is it, that in this passage Paul intends by the terms "God" and "the Father," not Jesus Christ but another being! How plain is it, that in the passage chosen as the text for this discourse, our Saviour intended by these terms not himself but another being! What other idea could his hearers receive? What decisive proofs are furnished by his constant habit of speaking of "the Father" and of "God," as another being, and of distinguishing himself from him!

NOTE TO PAGE 344.

I understand that the interest expressed by me in the character of Dr. Hopkins, has surprised some of my townsmen of Newport, who knew him only by report, or who saw him in their youth. I do not wonder at this. He lived almost wholly in his study, and like very retired

men, was the object of little sympathy. His appearance was that of a man who had nothing to do with the world I can well recollect the impression which he made on me when a boy, as he rode on horseback in a plaid gown fastened by a girdle round his waist, and with a study cap on his head instead of his wig. His delivery in the pulpit was the worst I ever met with. Such tones never came from any human voice within my hearing. He was the very ideal of bad delivery. Then I must say, the matter was often as uninviting as the manner. Dr. Hopkins was distinguished by nothing more than by faithfulness to his principles. He carried them out to their full extent. Believing, as he did, in total depravity, believing that there was nothing good or generous in human nature to which he could make an appeal, believing that he could benefit men only by setting before them their utterly lost and helpless condition, he came to the point without any circumlocution, and dealt out terrors with an unsparing liberality. Add to all this, that his manners had a bluntness, partly natural, partly the result of long seclusion in the country. We cannot wonder that such a man should be set down as hard and severe. But he had a true benevolence, and what is more worthy of being noted, he was given to a facetious style of conversation. Two instances immediately occur to me, which happened in my own circle. One day he dined at my father's with a young minister who was willing to comply with the costume of the day, but whose modesty only allowed the ruffles to peep from his breast. The Doctor said with good humor, "I don't care for ruffles; but if I wore them, I 'd wear them like a man." I recollect that on visiting him one day when he was about eighty years of age, I found his eyes much inflamed by reading and writing. I took the liberty to recommend abstinence from those occupations. He replied, smilingly, with an

amusing story, and then added, "If my eyes won't study, no eyes for me." This facetiousness may seem to some who are unacquainted with the world, not consistent with the great severity of his theology; but nothing is more common than this apparent self-contradiction. The ministers, who deal most in terrors, who preach doctrines which ought to make their flesh creep, and to turn their eyes into fountains of tears, are not generally distinguished by their spare forms or haggard countenances. They take the world as easily as people of a milder creed; and this does not show that they want sincerity or benevolence. It only shows how superficially men may believe in doctrines, which yet they would shudder to relinquish. It shows how little the import of language, which is thundered from the lips, is comprehended and felt. I should not set down as hard-hearted, a man whose appetite should be improved by preaching a sermon full of images and threatenings of "a bottomless hell." The best meals are sometimes made after such effusions. This is only an example of the numberless contradictions in human life. Men are every day saying and doing, from the power of education, habit, and imitation, what has no root whatever in their serious convictions. Dr. Hopkins, though his style of preaching and conversation did not always agree, was a sincere, benevolent man. I remember hearing of his giving on a journey all he had to a poor woman. On another occasion he contributed to some religious object a hundred dollars, which he had received for the copyright of a book; and this he gave from his penury, for he received no fixed salary, and depended, in a measure, on the donations of friends for common comforts. When he first established himself in Newport, he was brought into contact with two great evils, the slave trade and slavery, in both of which a large part of the inhabitants were or had been engaged. "His

spirit was stirred in him," and without "conferring with flesh or blood," without heeding the strong prejudices and passions enlisted on the side of these abuses, he bore his faithful testimony against them from the pulpit and the press. Still more, he labored for the education of the colored people, and had the happiness of seeing the fruits of his labors in the intelligence and exemplary piety of those who came under his influence. Much as he disapproved of the moderate theology of Dr. Stiles, he cheerfully coöperated with him in this work. Their names were joined to a circular for obtaining funds to educate Africans as missionaries to their own country. These two eminent men, who, as I think, held no ministerial intercourse, forgot their differences in their zeal for freedom and humanity.

Dr. Hopkins in conversing with me on his past history, reverted more frequently to his religious controversies than to any other event of his life, and always spoke as a man conscious of having gained the victory; and in this, I doubt not, that he judged justly. He was true, as I have said, to his principles, and carried them out fearlessly to their consequences; whilst his opponents wished to stop half-way. Of course it was easy for a practised disputant to drive them from their position. They had, indeed, the advantage of common sense on their side, but this availed little at a time when it was understood that common sense was to yield to the established creed. These controversies are most of them forgotten, but they were agitated with no small warmth. One of the most important, and which was confined to the Calvinists, turned on what were called the "Means of Grace." The question was, whether the unregenerate could do any thing for themselves, whether an unconverted man could, by prayer, by reading the Scriptures, and by public worship, promote his own conversion; whether, in a word,

any means used by an unregenerate man, would avail to that change of heart on which his future happiness depended. Dr. Hopkins, true to the fundamental principles of Calvinism, took the negative side of the question. He maintained, that man, being wholly depraved by nature, wholly averse to God and goodness, could do nothing but sin, before the mighty power of God had implanted a new principle of holiness within his heart ; that, of course, his prayers and efforts before conversion were sins, and deserved the divine wrath ; that his very struggles for pardon and salvation, wanting, as they did, a holy motive, springing from the deep selfishness of an unrenewed soul, only increased his guilt and condemnation. The doctrine was indeed horrible, but a plain, necessary result of man's total corruption and impotence. I state this controversy, that the reader may know the kind of topics in which the zeal and abilities of our fathers were employed. It also shows us how extremes meet. Dr. Hopkins contended, that no means of religion or virtue could avail, unless used with a sincere love of religion and virtue. In this doctrine, all liberal Christians concur. In their hands, however, the doctrine wears an entirely different aspect in consequence of their denial of total, original depravity, that terrible error, which drove Dr. Hopkins to conclusions equally shocking to the reason, to common sense, and to the best feelings of the heart.

The characteristic disposition of Dr. Hopkins to follow out his principles, was remarkably illustrated in a manuscript of his which was never published, and which perhaps was suppressed by those who had the charge of his papers, in consequence of its leaning towards some of the speculations of the infidel philosophy of the day, in regard to Utility or the General Good. It fell into my hands after his death, and struck me so much that I think I can trust my recollections of it. It gave the author's ideas of

Moral Good. He maintained that the object of "Moral Good," the object on which virtue is fixed, and the choice of which constitutes virtue, is "natural good," or the greatest possible amount of Enjoyment, not our own enjoyment only, but that of the whole system of being. He virtually, if not expressly, set forth this "natural good," that is, happiness in the simple sense of enjoyment, as the ultimate good, and made moral good the means. I well recollect how, in starting from this principle, he justified eternal punishment. He affirmed that sin or selfishness (synonymous words in his vocabulary) tended to counteract God's system, which is framed for infinite happiness, or tended to produce infinite misery. He then insisted, that by subjecting the sinner to endless, that is, infinite misery, this tendency was made manifest; a correspondence was established between the sin and the punishment, and a barrier was erected against sin, which was demanded by the greatness of the good menaced by the wrong-doer.

I have thrown together these recollections of a man, who has been crowded out of men's minds by the thronging events and interests of our time, but who must always fill an important place in our ecclesiastical history. He was a singularly blameless man, with the exception of intolerance towards those who differed from him. This he sometimes expressed in a manner which, to those unacquainted with him, seemed a sign of any thing but benignity. In one point of view, I take pleasure in thinking of him. He was an illustration of the power of our spiritual nature. In narrow circumstances, with few outward indulgences, in great seclusion, he yet found much to enjoy. He lived in a world of thought, above all earthly passions. He represented to himself, as the result of the divine government, a boundless diffusion of felicity through the universe, and contrived to merge in

this the horrors of his theological system. His doctrines, indeed, threw dark colors over the world around him; but he took refuge from the present state of things in the Millennium. The Millennium was his chosen ground. If any subject of thought possessed him above all others, I suppose it to have been this. The Millennium was more than a belief to him. It had the freshness of visible things. He was at home in it. His book on the subject has an air of reality, as if written from observation. He describes the habits and customs of the Millennium, as one familiar with them. He enjoyed this future glory of the church not a whit the less, because it was so much his own creation. The fundamental idea, the germ, he found in the Scriptures, but it expanded in and from his own mind. Whilst to the multitude he seemed a hard, dry theologian, feeding on the thorns of controversy, he was living in a region of imagination, feeding on visions of a holiness and a happiness, which are to make earth all but heaven. It has been my privilege to meet with other examples of the same character, with men, who, amidst privation, under bodily infirmity, and with none of those materials of enjoyment which the multitude are striving for, live in a world of thought, and enjoy what affluence never dreamed of, — men having nothing, yet possessing all things; and the sight of such has done me more good, has spoken more to my head and heart, than many sermons and volumes. I have learned the sufficiency of the mind to itself, its independence on outward things.

I regret that I did not use my acquaintance with Dr. Hopkins to get the particulars of the habits and conversation of Edwards and Whitefield, whom he knew intimately. I value the hints which I get about distinguished men from their friends, much more than written accounts of them. Most biographies are of little worth. The true object of a biography, which is to give us an insight

into men's characters, such as an intimate acquaintance with them would have furnished, is little comprehended. The sayings and actions of a man, which breathe most of what was individual in him, should be sought above all things by his historian; and yet most lives contain none or next to none of these. They are panegyrics, not lives. No department of literature is so false as biography. The object is, not to let down the hero; and consequently, what is most human, most genuine, most characteristic in his history is excluded. Sometimes one anecdote will let us into the secret of a man's soul more than all the prominent events of his life. It is not impossible that some readers may object to some of my notices of the stern theologian, to whom this note refers, as too familiar. This seems to me their merit. They show that he was not a mere theologian, that he had the sympathies of a man.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

DISCOURSE

PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIETY.

MATTHEW XIX. 13, 14: "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

THE subject of this discourse is indicated by the name of the society, at whose request I appear in this place. The Sunday-School, this is now to engage our attention. I believe, I can best aid it by expounding the principles on which it should rest and by which it should be guided. I am not anxious to pronounce an eulogy on this and similar institutions. They do much good, but they are destined to do greater. They are in their infancy, and only giving promise of the benefits they are to confer. They already enjoy patronage, and this will increase certainly, necessarily, in proportion as they shall grow in efficiency and usefulness. I wish to say something of the great principles which should preside over them, and of the modes of operation by which they can best accomplish their end. This discourse, though

especially designed for Sunday-schools, is, in truth, equally applicable to domestic instruction. Parents who are anxious to train up their children in the paths of Christian virtue, will find in every principle and rule, now to be laid down, a guide for their own steps. How to reach, influence, enlighten, elevate the youthful mind, this is the grand topic; and who ought not to be interested in it? for who has not an interest in the young?

I propose to set before you my views under the following heads. I shall consider, first, the Principle on which such schools should be founded; next, their End or great object; in the third place, What they should teach; and, lastly, How they should teach. These divisions, if there were time to fill them up, would exhaust the subject. I shall satisfy myself with offering you what seem to me the most important views under each.

I. I am, first, to consider the principle on which the Sunday-school should be founded. It must be founded and carried on in Faith. You must not establish it from imitation, nor set it in motion because other sects have adopted a like machinery. The Sunday-school must be founded on and sustained by a strong faith in its usefulness, its worth, its importance. Faith is the spring of all energetic action. Men throw their souls into objects only because they believe them to be attainable and worth pursuit. You must have faith in your school; and for this end you must have faith in God; in the child whom you teach; and in the Scriptures which are to be taught.

You must have faith in God; and by this I do not mean a general belief of his existence and perfection,

but a faith in him as the father and friend of the children whom you instruct, as desiring their progress more than all human friends, and as most ready to aid you in your efforts for their good. You must not feel yourselves alone. You must not think when you enter the place of teaching, that only you and your pupils are present, and that you have nothing but your power and wisdom to rely on for success. You must feel a higher presence. You must feel that the Father of these children is near you, and that he loves them with a boundless love. Do not think of God as interested only in higher orders of beings, or only in great and distinguished men. The little child is as dear to him as the hero, as the philosopher, as the angel; for in that child are the germs of an angel's powers, and God has called him into being that he may become an angel. On this faith every Sunday-school should be built, and on such a foundation it will stand firm and gather strength.

Again, you must have faith in the child whom you instruct. Believe in the greatness of its nature and in its capacity of improvement. Do not measure its mind by its frail, slender form. In a very few years, in ten years perhaps, that child is to come forward into life, to take on him the duties of an arduous vocation, to assume serious responsibilities, and soon after he may be the head of a family and have a voice in the government of his country. All the powers which he is to put forth in life, all the powers which are to be unfolded in his endless being, are now wrapped up within him. That mind, not you, nor I, nor an angel, can comprehend. Feel that your scholar, young as he is, is worthy of your intensest interest. Have faith in his nature, especially as fitted for religion. Do not, as some do, look on the

child as born under the curse of God, as naturally hostile to all goodness and truth. What! the child totally depraved! Can it be that such a thought ever entered the mind of a human being? especially of a parent! What! in the beauty of childhood and youth, in that open brow, that cheerful smile, do you see the brand of total corruption? Is it a little fiend who sleeps so sweetly on his mother's breast? Was it an infant demon, which Jesus took in his arms and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"? Is the child, who, as you relate to him a story of suffering or generosity, listens with a tearful or kindling eye and a throbbing heart, is *he* a child of hell? As soon could I look on the sun, and think it the source of darkness, as on the countenance of childhood or of youth, and see total depravity written there. My friends, we should believe any doctrine sooner than this, for it tempts us to curse the day of our birth; to loathe our existence; and, by making our Creator our worst foe and our fellow-creatures hateful, it tends to rupture all the ties which bind us to God and our race. My friends, have faith in the child; not that it is virtuous and holy at birth; for virtue or holiness is not, cannot be, born with us, but is a free, voluntary effort of a being who knows the distinction of right and wrong, and who, if tempted, adheres to the right; but have faith in the child as capable of knowing and loving the good and the true, as having a conscience to take the side of duty, as open to ingenuous motives for well-doing, as created for knowledge, wisdom, piety, and disinterested love.

Once more, you must have faith in Christianity, as adapted to the mind of the child, as the very truth fitted to enlighten, interest, and improve the human being in the first years of his life. It is the property of our

religion, that, whilst it stretches beyond the grasp of the mightiest intellect, it contracts itself, so to speak, within the limits of the narrowest; that, whilst it furnishes matter of inexhaustible speculation to such men as Locke and Newton, it condescends to the ignorant and becomes the teacher of babes. Christianity at once speaks with authority in the schools of the learned, and enters the nursery to instil with gentle voice celestial wisdom into the ears of infancy. And this wonderful property of our religion is to be explained by its being founded on, and answering to, the primitive and most universal principles of human nature. It reveals God as a parent; and the first sentiment which dawns on the child, is love to its parents. It enjoins not arbitrary commands, but teaches the everlasting principles of duty; and the sense of duty begins to unfold itself in the earliest stages of our being. It speaks of a future world and its inhabitants; and childhood welcomes the idea of angels, of spirits, of the vast, the wonderful, the unseen. Above all, Christianity is set forth in the life, the history, the character of Jesus; and his character, though so sublime, is still so real, so genuine, so remarkable for simplicity, and so naturally unfolded amidst the common scenes of life, that it is seized in its principal features by the child as no other greatness can be. One of the excellences of Christianity is, that it is not an abtruse theory, not wrapped up in abstract phrases; but taught us in facts, in narratives. It lives, moves, speaks, and acts before our eyes. Christian love is not taught us in cold precepts. It speaks from the cross. So, immortality is not a vague promise. It breaks forth like the morning from the tomb near Calvary. It becomes a glorious reality in the person of the rising Saviour; and

his ascension opens to our view the heaven into which he enters. It is this historical form of our religion, which peculiarly adapts it to childhood, to the imagination and heart, which open first in childhood. In this sense, the kingdom of heaven, the religion of Christ, belongs to children. This you must feel. Believe in the fitness of our religion for those you teach. Feel that you have the very instrument for acting on the young mind, that you have the life-giving word.

II. Having considered the faith in which the Sunday-school should be founded, I proceed now to consider the end, the great object, which should be proposed and kept steadily in view by its friends. To work efficiently and usefully, we must understand what we are to work for. In proportion as an end is seen dimly and unsteadily, our action will be vague, uncertain, and our energy wasted. What, then, is the end of the Sunday-school? The great end is, to awaken the soul of the pupil, to bring his understanding, conscience, and heart into earnest, vigorous action on religious and moral truth, to excite and cherish in him Spiritual Life. Inward life, force, activity, this it must be our aim to call forth and build up in all our teachings of the young, especially in religious teaching. You must never forget, my friends, whether parents or Sunday-School instructers, what kind of a being you are acting upon. Never forget that the child is a rational, moral, free being, and that the great end of education is to awaken rational and moral energy within him, and to lead him to the free choice of the right, to the free determination of himself to truth and duty. The child is not a piece of wax to be moulded at another's pleasure, not a stone to be hewn

passively into any shape which the caprice and interest of others may dictate ; but a living, thinking being, made to act from principles in his own heart, to distinguish for himself between good and evil, between truth and falsehood, to form himself, to be in an important sense the author of his own character, the determiner of his own future being. This most important view of the child should never forsake the teacher. He is a free moral agent, and our end should be to develope such a being. He must not be treated as if he were unthinking matter. You can make a house, a ship, a statue, without its own consent. You determine the machines which you form wholly by your own will. The child has a will as well as yourselves. The great design of his being is, that he should act *from* himself and *on* himself. He can understand the perfection of his nature, and is created that he may accomplish it from free choice, from a sense of duty, from his own deliberate purpose.

The great end in religious instruction, whether in the Sunday-school or family, is, not to stamp *our* minds irresistibly on the young, but to stir up their own ; not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own ; not to give them a definite amount of knowledge, but to inspire a fervent love of truth ; not to form an outward regularity, but to touch inward springs ; not to burden the memory, but to quicken and strengthen the power of thought ; not to bind them by ineradicable prejudices to our particular sect or peculiar notions, but to prepare them for impartial, conscientious judging of whatever subjects may, in the course of Providence, be offered to their decision ; not to impose religion upon them in the form of arbitrary rules, which rest on no foundation but our own word and

will, but to awaken the conscience, the moral discernment, so that they may discern and approve for themselves what is everlastingly right and good; not to *tell* them that God is good, but to help them to see and feel his love in all that he does within and around them; not to tell them of the dignity of Christ, but to open their inward eye to the beauty and greatness of his character, and to enkindle aspirations after a kindred virtue. In a word, the great object of all schools is, to awaken intellectual and moral life in the child. Life is the great thing to be sought in a human being. Hitherto, most religions and governments have been very much contrivances for extinguishing life in the human soul. Thanks to God, we live to see the dawning of a better day.

By these remarks, I do not mean that we are never to give our children a command without assigning our reasons, or an opinion without stating our proofs. They must rely on us in the first instance, for much that they cannot comprehend; but I mean, that our great aim in controlling them, must be to train them to control themselves, and our great aim in giving them instruction, must be to aid them in the acquisition of truth for themselves. As far as possible, religion should be adapted to their minds and hearts. We should teach religion as we do nature. We do not shut up our children from outward nature, and require them to believe in the great laws of the Creator, in the powers of light, heat, steam, gravity, on our word alone. We put them in the presence of nature. We delight to verify what we teach them of the mineral, animal, and vegetable worlds, by facts placed under their own eyes. We encourage them to observe for themselves, and to submit to experiment what they

hear. Now, all the great principles of morals and religion may be illustrated and confirmed, like the great laws of nature, by what falls under the child's own consciousness and experience. Indeed great moral and religious truths are nearer to him than the principles of natural science. The germs of them are in the soul. All the elementary ideas of God and duty and love and happiness come to him from his own spiritual powers and affections. Moral good and evil, virtue and vice, are revealed to him in his own motives of action and in the motives of those around him. Faith in God and virtue does not depend on assertion alone. Religion carries its own evidence with it more than history or science. It should rest more on the soul's own consciousness, experience, and observation. To wake up the soul to a clear, affectionate perception of the reality and truth and greatness of religion, is the great end of teaching.

The great danger of Sunday-schools is, that they will fall into a course of mechanical teaching, that they will give religion as a lifeless tradition, and not as a quickening reality. It is not enough to use words conveying truth. Truth must be so given that the mind will lay hold on, will recognise it as truth, and will incorporate it with itself. The most important truth may lie like a dead weight on the mind, just as the most wholesome food, for want of action in the digestive organs, becomes an oppressive load. I do not think that so much harm is done by giving error to a child, as by giving truth in a lifeless form. What is the misery of the multitudes in Christian countries? Not that they disbelieve Christianity; not they hold great errors, but that truth lies dead within them. They use the most sacred words without meaning. They hear of spiritual realities, awful enough

to raise the dead, with utter unconcern; and one reason of this insensibility is, that teaching in early life was so mechanical, that religion was lodged in the memory and the unthinking belief, whilst the reason was not awakened, nor the conscience nor the heart moved. According to the common modes of instruction, the minds of the young become worn to great truths. By reading the Scriptures without thought or feeling, their minds are dulled to its most touching and sublime passages; and, when once a passage lies dead in the mind, its resurrection to life and power is a most difficult work. Here lies the great danger of Sunday-schools. Let us never forget, that their end is to awaken life in the minds and hearts of the young.

III. I now proceed to consider what is to be taught in the Sunday-schools, to accomplish the great end of which I have spoken;* and this may seem soon settled. Should I ask you what is to be taught in the Sunday-school, the answer would be, "The Christian religion. The institution is a Christian one, and has for its end the communication of Christian truth." I acquiesce in the answer; but the question then comes, "In what forms shall the religion be taught, so as to wake up the life of the child? Shall a catechism be taught?" I say, No. A catechism is a skeleton, a dead letter, a petrifaction. Wanting life, it can give none. A cold abstraction, it cannot but make religion repulsive to pupils whose age

* In the remarks which I am to make on what is to be taught in the Sunday-school, I take it for granted that this school is the first stage of a course of religious instruction, not the whole course; that it prepares for, but does not include Bible classes, and other classes in which the most difficult books of Scripture, the evidences of natural and revealed religion and a system of moral philosophy, should be taught.

demands that truth should be embodied, set before their eyes, bound up with real life. A catechism, by being systematical, may give a certain order and method to teaching; but systems of theology are out of place in Sunday-schools. They belong to the end, not the beginning, of religious teaching. Besides they are so generally the constructions of human ingenuity rather than the living forms of divine wisdom; they gave such undue prominence to doctrines which have been lifted into importance only by the accident of having been made matters of controversy; they so often sacrifice common sense, the plain dictates of reason and conscience, to the preservation of what is called consistency; they lay such fetters on teacher and learner, and prevent so much the free action of the mind and heart, that they seldom enter the Sunday-school but to darken and mislead it.

The Christian religion should be learned not from catechisms and systems, but from the Scriptures, and especially from that part of the Scriptures in which it especially resides, in the histories, actions, words, sufferings, triumphs of Jesus Christ. The Gospels, the Gospels, these should be the text-book of Sunday-schools. They are more adapted to the child than any other part of Scripture. They are full of life, reality, beauty, power, and in skilful hands are fitted above all writing to awaken spiritual life in old and young.

The Gospels are to be the study of the Sunday-school teacher, and of all who teach the young; and the great object of study must be, to penetrate to the spirit of these divine writings, and, above all things, to comprehend the spirit, character, purpose, motives, love of Jesus Christ. He is to be the great study. In him, his

religion is revealed as nowhere else. Much attention is now given, and properly given, by teachers to what may be called the letter of the Gospels, to the geography of the country where Christ lived, to the customs to which he refers, to the state of society which surrounded him. This knowledge is of great utility. We should strive to learn the circumstances in which Jesus was placed and lived, as thoroughly as those of our own times. We should study the men among whom he lived, their opinions and passions, their hopes and expectations, the sects who hated and opposed him, the superstitions which prevailed among the learned and the multitude, and strive to see all these things as vividly as if we had lived at the very moment of Christ's ministry. But all this knowledge is to be gained not for its own sake, but as a means of bringing us near to Jesus, of letting us into the secrets of his mind, of revealing to us his spirit and character, and of bringing out the full purpose and import of all that he did and said. It is only by knowing the people among whom he was born, and brought up, and lived, and died, that we can fully comprehend the originality, strength, and dignity of his character, his unborrowed, self-subsisting excellence, his miraculous love. We have very few of us a conception, how Jesus stood alone in the age in which he lived, how unsustained he was in his great work, how he found not one mind to comprehend his own, not one friend to sympathize with his great purpose, how every outward influence withstood him; and, for want of this conception, we do not regard Jesus with the interest which his character should inspire.

The teachers of the young should strive to be at *home* with Jesus, to know him familiarly, to form a

clear, vivid, bright idea of him, to see him just as he appeared on earth, to see him in the very dress in which he manifested himself to the men of his age. They should follow him to the temple, to the mountain top, to the shores of the sea of Galilee, and should understand the mixed feelings of the crowd around him, should see the scowl of the Pharisee who listened to catch his words for some matter of accusation, the imploring look of the diseased seeking healing from his words, the gaze of wonder among the ignorant, and the delighted, affectionate, reverential eagerness with which the single-hearted and humble hung on his lips. Just in proportion as we can place ourselves near to Christ, his wisdom, love, greatness will break forth, and we shall be able to bring him near to the mind of the child.

The truth is, that few of us apprehend vividly the circumstances under which Jesus lived and taught, and therefore much of the propriety, beauty, and authority of his character is lost. For example, his outward condition is not made real to us. The pictures which the great artists have left us of Jesus, have helped to lead us astray. He is there seen with a glory around his head, and arrayed in a robe of grace and majesty. Now Jesus was a poor man; he had lived and wrought as a carpenter, and he came in the dress common to those with whom he had grown up. His chosen companions were natives of an obscure province, despised for its ignorance and rude manners, and they followed him in the garb of men who were accustomed to live by daily toil. Such was the outward condition of Jesus. Such was his manifestation to a people burning with expectation of a splendid, conquering deliverer; and in such

circumstances he spoke with an authority which awed both high and low. In learning the outward circumstances of Jesus, we not merely satisfy a natural curiosity, but obtain a help towards understanding his character and the spirit of his religion. His condition reveals to us the force and dignity of his mind, which could dispense with the ordinary means of inspiring respect. It shows the deep sympathy of Christ with the poor of our race, for among these he chose to live. It speaks condemnation to those who, professing to believe in Christ, separate themselves from the multitude of men because of the accident of wealth, and attach ideas of superiority to dress and show. From this illustration you may learn the importance of being acquainted with every part of Christ's history, with his common life, as well as his more solemn actions and teachings. Every thing relating to him breathes instruction and gives the teacher a power over the mind of the child.

The Gospels must be the great study to the Sunday-school teacher. Many, when they hear of studying the New Testament, imagine that they must examine commentators to understand better the difficult texts, the dark passages in that book. I mean something very different. Strive indeed to clear up as far as you can the obscure portions of Christ's teaching. There are texts, which, in consequence of their connexion with forgotten circumstances of the time, are now of uncertain meaning. But do not think that the most important truths of Christianity are locked up in these dark passages of the New Testament. There is nothing in the dark, which is not to be found in the plain, portions of Scripture. Perhaps the highest use of examining dif-

ficult texts, is to discover their harmony with those that are clear. The parts of the Gospel, which the Sunday-school teacher should most study, are those which need no great elucidation from criticism, the parables, the miracles, the actions, the suffering, the prayers, the tears of Jesus; and these are to be studied, that the teacher may learn the spirit, the soul of Christ, may come near to that wonderful being, may learn the great purpose to which he was devoted, the affections which overflowed his heart, the depth and expansiveness of his love, the profoundness of his wisdom, the unconquerable strength of his trust in God.* The character of Christ is the sum of his religion. It is the clearest, the most beautiful manifestation of the character of God, far more clear and touching than all the teachings of nature. It is also the brightest revelation to us of the Moral Perfection which his precepts enjoin, of disinterested love to God and man, of faithfulness to principle, of fearlessness in duty, of superiority to the world, of delight in the Good and the True. The expositions of the Christian virtues in all the volumes of all ages,

* Commentaries have their use, but not the highest use. They explain the letter of Christianity, give the meaning of words, remove obscurities from the sense, and so far they do great good; but the life, the power, the spirit of Christianity, they do not unfold. They do not lay open to us the heart of Christ. I remember that a short time ago I was reading a book, not intended to be a religious one, in which some remarks were offered on the conduct of Jesus, as, just before his death, he descended from the Mount of Olives, and amidst a crowd of shouting disciples looked on Jerusalem, the city of his murderers, which in a few hours was to be stained with his innocent blood. The conscious greatness with which he announced the ruin of that proud metropolis and its venerated temple, and his deep sympathy with its approaching woes, bursting forth in tears, and making him forget for a moment his own near agonies and the shouts of the surrounding multitude, were brought to my mind more distinctly than ever before; and I felt that this more vivid apprehension of Jesus was worth more than much of the learning in which commentators abound.

are cold and dark compared with the genial light and the warm coloring in which Christ's character sets before us the spirit of his religion, the perfection of our nature.

The great work, then, of the Sunday-school teacher, is to teach Christ, and to teach him not as set forth in creeds and human systems, but as living and moving in the simple histories of the Evangelists. Christ is to be taught; and by this I mean, not any mystical doctrine about his nature, not the doctrine of the Trinity, but the spirit of Christ, breathing forth in all that he said and all that he did. We should seek, that the child should know his heavenly friend and Saviour with the distinctness with which he knows an earthly friend; and this knowledge is not to be given by teaching him dark notions about Christ, which have perplexed and convulsed the church for ages. The doctrine of the Trinity seems to me only fitted to throw a mistiness over Christ, to place him beyond the reach of our understanding and hearts. When I am told that Jesus Christ is the second person in the Trinity, one of three persons, who constitute one God, one Infinite mind, I am plunged into an abyss of darkness. Jesus becomes to me the most unintelligible being in the universe. God I can know. Man I can understand. But Christ, as described in human creeds, a compound being, at once man and God, a once infinite in wisdom and ignorant of innumerable truths, and who is so united with two other persons as to make with them one mind, Christ so represented baffles all my faculties. I cannot lay hold on him. My weak intellect is wholly at fault; and I cannot believe that the child's intellect can better apprehend him. This is a grave objection to the doctrine of the Trinity. It destroys the reality, the

distinctness, the touching nearness of Jesus Christ. It gives him an air of fiction, and has done more than all things to prevent a true, deep acquaintance with him, with his spirit, with the workings of his mind, with the sublimity of his virtue. It has thrown a glare over him, under which the bright and beautiful features of his character have been very much concealed.

From what I have said, you see what I suppose the Sunday-school teacher is to learn and teach. It is the Christian religion as unfolded in the plainest portions of the Gospel. Before leaving this topic, I wish to offer some remarks, which may prevent all misapprehension of what I have said. I have spoken against teaching Christianity to children as a system. I have spoken of the inadequacy of catechisms. In thus speaking, I do not mean that the teacher shall have nothing systematic in his knowledge. Far from it. He must not satisfy himself with studying separate actions, words, and miracles of Jesus. He must look at Christ's history and teaching as a whole, and observe the great features of his truth and goodness, the grand characteristics of his system, and in this way learn what great impressions he must strive to make on the child, by the particular facts and precepts which each lesson presents. There ought to be a unity in the mind of the teacher. His instructions must not be loose fragments, but be bound together by great views. Perhaps you may ask, what are these great views of Christianity, which pervade it throughout, and to which the mind of the learner must be continually turned? There are three, which seem to me especially prominent, the Spirituality of the religion, its Disinterestedness, and, lastly, the vastness, the Infinity of its Prospects.

The first great feature of Christianity which should be brought out continually to the child, is its Spirituality. Christ is a spiritual deliverer. His salvation is inward. This great truth cannot be too much insisted on. Christ's salvation is within. The evils from which he comes to release us are inward. The felicity which he came to give is inward, and therefore everlasting. Carry then your pupils into themselves. Awake in them, as far as possible, a consciousness of their spiritual nature, of the infinite riches which are locked up in reason, in conscience, in the power of knowing God, loving goodness, and practising duty; and use all the history and teachings of Christ, to set him before them as the fountain of life and light to their souls. For example, when his reign, kingdom, power, authority, throne, are spoken of, guard them against attaching an outward import to these words; teach them that they mean not an outward empire, but the purifying, elevating influence of his character, truth, spirit, on the human mind. Use all his miracles as types, emblems, of a spiritual salvation. When your pupils read of his giving sight to the blind, let them see in this a manifestation of his character as the Light of the world; and, in the joy of the individual whose eyes were opened from perpetual night on the beauty of nature, let them see a figure of the happiness of the true disciple, who, by following Christ, is brought to the vision of a more glorious luminary than the sun, and of a more majestic and enduring universe than material worlds. When the precepts of Christ are the subjects of conversation, turn the mind of the child to their spiritual import. Let him see, that the worth of the action lies in the principle, motive, purpose, from which it springs; that love

to God, not outward worship, and love to man, not outward deeds, are the very essence, soul, centre, of the Christian law. Turn his attention to the singular force and boldness of language, in which Jesus calls to rise above the body and the world, above the pleasures and pains of the senses, above wealth and show, above every outward good. In speaking of the promises and threatenings of Christianity, do not speak as if goodness were to be sought and sin shunned for their outward consequences; but express your deep conviction, that goodness is its own reward, worth infinitely more than all outward recompense, and that sin is its own curse, and more to be dreaded on its own account, than a burning hell. When God is the subject of conversation, do not spend all your strength in talking of what he has made around you; do not point the young to his outward works as his chief manifestations. Lead them to think of him as revealed in their own minds, as the Father of their spirits, as more intimately present with their souls than with the sun, and teach them to account as his best gifts, not outward possessions, but the silent influences of his spirit, his communications of light to their minds, of warmth and elevation to their feelings, and of force to their resolution of well-doing. Let the spirituality of Christianity shine forth in all your teachings. Let the young see how superior Jesus was to outward things, how he looked down on wealth and show as below his notice, how he cared nothing for outward distinctions, how the beggar by the road-side received from him marks of deeper interest than Pilate on his judgment-seat or Herod on his throne, how he looked only at the human spirit and sought nothing but its recovery and life.

I have spoken of the Spirituality of Christianity. The next great feature of the religion to be constantly set before the child, is its Disinterestedness. The essence of Christianity is generous affection. Nothing so distinguishes it as generosity. Disinterested love not only breaks out in separate teachings of Christ; it spreads like the broad light of heaven over the whole religion. Every precept is but an aspect, an expression of generous love. This prompted every word, guided every step, of Jesus. It was the life of his ministry; it warmed his heart in death; it flowed out with his heart's blood. The pupil should be constantly led to see and feel this divine spirit pervading the religion. The Gospels should be used to inspire him with reverence for generous self-sacrifice and with aversion to every thing narrow and mean. Let him learn that he is not to live for himself; that he has a heart to be given to God and to his fellow-creatures; that he is to do the will of God, not in a mercenary spirit, but from gratitude, filial love, and from sincere delight in goodness; that he is to prepare himself to toil and suffer for his race. The cross, that emblem of self-sacrifice, that highest form of an all-surrendering love, is to be set before him as the standard of his religion, the banner under which he is to live, and, if God so require, to die.

There is one other great feature of Christianity, and that is the vastness, the Infinity of its Prospects. This was revealed in the whole life of Jesus. In all that he said, we see his mind possessed with the thought of being ordained to confer an infinite good. That teacher knows little of Christ, who does not see him filled with the consciousness of being the author of an everlasting salvation and happiness to the human race. "I am the

resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me shall never see death." Such was his language, and such never fell before from human lips. When I endeavour to bring to my mind the vast hopes which inspired him as he pronounced these words, and his joy at the anticipation of the immortal fruits which his life and death were to yield to our race, I feel how little his character is yet understood by those who think of Jesus as a man of sorrow, borne down habitually by a load of grief. Constantly lead your pupils to observe, how real, deep, and vivid was the impression on the mind of Jesus, of that future, everlasting life, which he came to bestow. Speak to them of the happiness with which he looked on all human virtue, as being a germ which was to unfold for ever, a fountain of living water which was to spring up into immortality, a love which was to expand through all ages and to embrace the universe. It is through the mind of Christ, living, as it did, in a higher world, that they can best comprehend the reality and vastness of the prospects of the human soul.

Such are the three great features of the religion which the teacher should bring most frequently to the mind of the child. In these, as in all my preceding remarks, you perceive the importance which I attach to the character of Christ, as the great means of giving spiritual light and life to the mind. The Gospels, in which he is placed before us so vividly, are in truth the chief repositories of divine wisdom. The greatest productions of human genius have little quickening power in comparison with these simple narratives. In reading the Gospels, I feel myself in presence of one who speaks as man never spake; whose voice is not of the earth; who speaks with a tone of reality and authority altogether his

own ; who speaks of God as conscious of his immediate presence, as enjoying with him the intimacy of an only Son ; and who speaks of heaven, as most familiar with the higher states of being. Great truths come from Jesus with a simplicity, an ease, showing how deeply they pervaded and possessed his mind. No books astonish me like the Gospels. Jesus, the hero of the story, is a more extraordinary being than imagination has feigned, and yet his character has an impress of nature, consistency, truth, never surpassed. You have all seen portraits, which, as soon as seen, you felt to be likenesses, so living were they, so natural, so true. Such is the impression made on my mind by the Gospels. I believe that you or I could lift mountains or create a world as easily as fanaticism or imposture could have created such a character and history as that of Jesus Christ. I have read the Gospels for years, and seldom read them now without gaining some new or more striking view of the great teacher and deliverer whom they portray. Of all books, they deserve most the study of youth and age. Happy the Sunday-school in which their spirit is revealed !

But I have not yet said every thing in favor of them as the great sources of instruction. I have said, that the Christian religion is to be taught from the Gospels. This is their great, but not their only use. Much incidental instruction is to be drawn from them. There are two great subjects on which it is very desirable to give to the young the light they can receive, human nature and human life ; and on these points the Gospels furnish occasions of much useful teaching. They give us not only the life and character of Christ, but place him before us in the midst of human beings and of human

affairs. Peter, the ardent, the confident, the false, the penitent Peter; the affectionate John; the treacherous Judas, selling his Master for gold; Mary, the mother, at the cross; Mary Magdalen at the tomb; the woman, who had been a sinner, bathing his feet with tears, and wiping them with the hair of her head;— what revelations of the human soul are these! What depths of our nature do they lay open! It is a remarkable fact, that the great masters of painting have drawn their chief subjects from the New Testament; so full is this volume of the most powerful and touching exhibitions of human character. And how much instruction does this book convey in regard to life as well as in regard to the soul! I do not know a more affecting picture of human experience than the simple narrative of Luke;—"When Jesus came nigh to the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and much people of the city was with her." The Gospels show us fellow beings in all varieties of condition, the blind man, the leper, the rich young ruler, the furious multitude. They give practical views of life, which cannot be too early impressed. They show us, in the history of Jesus and his Apostles, that true greatness may be found in the humblest ranks, and that goodness, in proportion as it becomes eminent, exposes itself to hatred and reproach, so that we must make up our minds, if we would be faithful, to encounter shame and loss for God and duty. In truth, all the variety of wisdom which youth needs, may be extracted from these writings. The Gospels, then, are to be the great study of the Sunday-school.

I cannot close these remarks on what is to be taught

in the Sunday-school, without repeating what I have said of the chief danger of this institution. I refer to the danger of mechanical teaching, by which the young mind becomes worn, deadened to the greatest truths. The Gospels, life-giving as they are, may be rendered wholly inoperative by the want of life in the instructor. So great is my dread of tame, mechanical teaching, that I am sometimes almost tempted to question the utility of Sunday-schools. We, Protestants, in our zeal for the Bible, are apt to forget, that the very commonness of the book tends to impair its power, that familiarity breeds indifference, and that no book, therefore, requires such a living power in the teacher. He must beware, lest he make the Gospels trite by too frequent repetition. It will often be best for him to assist his pupils in extracting the great principle of truth involved in a precept, parable, or action of Jesus, and to make this the subject of conversation, without farther reference to the text by which it was suggested. If he can lead them by fit questions, to find this principle in their own consciousness and experience, in their own moral judgments and feelings, and to discover how it should be applied to their characters and brought out in their common lives, he will not only convey the most important instruction, but will give new vividness and interest to the Scriptures and a deeper conviction of their truth, by showing how congenial they are with human nature, and how intimately connected with human affairs and with real life. Let me also mention, as another means of preserving the Scriptures from degradation by too frequent handling, that extracts from biography, history, natural science, fitted to make religious

impressions, should be occasionally introduced into the Sunday-school. Such seems to me the instruction which the ends of this institution require.

IV. We have now seen what is to be taught in the Sunday-school, and the question now comes, How shall it be taught? This is my last head, and not the least important. On the manner of teaching, how much depends! I fear it is not sufficiently studied by Sunday-school instructors. They meet generally, and ought regularly to meet, to prepare themselves for their tasks. But their object commonly is to learn *what* they are to teach, rather than *how* to teach it; but the last requires equal attention with the first, I had almost said more. From deficiency in this, we sometimes see that an instructor, profoundly acquainted with his subject, is less successful in teaching than another of comparatively superficial acquisitions; he knows much, but does not know the way to the child's mind and heart. The same truth, which attracts and impresses from one man's lips, repels from another. At the meeting of the Sunday-school teachers, it is not enough to learn the meaning of the portion of Scripture which is to be the subject of the next lesson; it is more important to select from it the particular topics which are adapted to the pupil's comprehension, and still more necessary to inquire, under what lights or aspects they may be brought to his view, so as to arrest attention and reach the heart. A principal end in the meeting of teachers should be to learn the art of teaching, the way of approach to the youthful mind.

The first aim of the teacher will of course be, to fix the attention of the pupil. It is in vain that you have

his body in the school-room, if his mind is wandering beyond it, or refuses to fasten itself on the topic of discourse. In common schools attention is fixed by a severe discipline, incompatible with the spirit of Sunday-schools. Of course the teacher must aim to secure it by a moral influence over the youthful mind.

As the first means of establishing an influence over the young, I would say, you must love them. Nothing attracts like love. Children are said to be shrewd physiognomists, and read as by instinct our feelings in our countenances; they know and are drawn to their friends. I recently asked, how a singularly successful teacher in religion obtained his remarkable ascendency over the young. The reply was, that his whole intercourse expressed affection. His secret was a sincere love.

The next remark is, that, to awaken in the young an interest in what you teach, you must take an interest in it yourselves. You must not only understand, but feel, the truth. Your manner must have the natural animation, which always accompanies a work into which our hearts enter. Accordingly, one of the chief qualifications of a Sunday-school teacher is religious sensibility. Old and young are drawn by a natural earnestness of manner. Almost any subject may be made interesting, if the teacher will but throw into it his soul.

Another important rule is, Let your teaching be intelligible. Children will not listen to words which excite no ideas, or only vague and misty conceptions. Speak to them in the familiar, simple language of common life, and if the lesson have difficult terms, define them. Children love light, not darkness. Choose topics of conversation to which their minds are equal, *and pass* from one to another by steps which the young

can follow. Be clear, and you will do much towards being interesting teachers.

Another suggestion is, Teach much by questions. These stimulate, stir up the young mind, and make it its own teacher. They encourage the spirit of inquiry, the habit of thought. Questions, skilfully proposed, turn the child to his own consciousness and experience, and will often draw out from his own soul the truth which you wish to impart; and no lesson is so well learned, as that which a man or a child teaches himself.

Again, Teach graphically where you can. That is, when you are discoursing of any narrative of Scripture, or relating an incident from other sources, try to seize its great points and to place it before the eyes of your pupils. Cultivate the power of description. A story well told, and in which the most important particulars are brought out in a strong light, not only fixes attention, but often carries a truth farthest into the soul.

Another rule is, Lay the chief stress on what is most important in religion. Do not conduct the child over the Gospels as over a dead level. Seize on the great points, the great ideas. Do not confound the essential and the unessential, or insist with the same earnestness on grand, comprehensive, life-giving truths, and on disputable articles of faith. Immense injury is done by teaching doubtful or secondary doctrines as if they were the weightiest matters of Christianity; for, as time rolls over the child, and his mind unfolds, he discovers that one and another dogma, which he was taught to regard as fundamental, is uncertian if not false, and his skepticism is apt to spread from this weak point over the whole Christian system. Make it your aim to fix in your pupils the grand principles in which the

essence of Christianity consists, and which all time and experience serve to confirm; and, in doing this, you will open the mind to all truth as fast as it is presented in the course of Providence.

Another rule is, Carry a cheerful spirit into religious teaching. Do not merely speak of Christianity as the only fountain of happiness. Let your tones and words bear witness to its benignant, cheering influence. Youth is the age of joy and hope, and nothing repels it more than gloom. Do not array religion in terror. Do not make God a painful thought by speaking of him as present only to see and punish sin. Speak of his fatherly interest in the young with a warm heart and a beaming eye, and encourage their filial approach and prayers. On this part, however, you must beware of sacrificing truth to the desire of winning your pupil. Truth, truth in her severest as well as mildest forms, must be placed before the young. Do not, to attract them to duty, represent it as a smooth and flowery path. Do not tell them that they can become good, excellent, generous, holy, without effort and pain. Teach them that the sacrifice of self-will, of private interest, and pleasure, to others' rights and happiness, to the dictates of conscience, to the will of God, is the very essence of piety and goodness. But at the same time teach them, that there is a pure, calm joy, an inward peace, in surrendering every thing to duty, which can be found in no selfish success. Help them to sympathize with the toils, pains, sacrifices of the philanthropist, the martyr, the patriot, and inspire contempt of fear and peril in adhering to truth and God.

I will add one more rule. Speak of duty, of religion, as something real, just as you speak of the interests of

this life. Do not speak, as if you were repeating words received from tradition, but as if you were talking of things which you have seen and known. Nothing attracts old and young more than a tone of reality, the natural tone of strong conviction. Speak to them of God as a real being, of heaven as a real state, of duty as a real obligation. Let them see, that you regard Christianity as intended to bear on real and common life, that you expect every principle which you teach to be acted out, to be made a rule in the concerns of every day. Show the application of Christianity to the familiar scenes and pursuits of life. Bring it out to them as the Great Reality. So teach, and you will not teach in vain.

I have thus set before you the principles on which Sunday-schools should rest, and by which they should be guided. If they shall, in any degree, conform to these principles, and I trust they will, you cannot, my friends, cherish them with too much care. Their purpose cannot be spoken of too strongly. Their end is, the moral and religious education of the young, and this is the most pressing concern of our times. In all times, indeed, it has strong claims; but it was never, perhaps, so important as now, and never could its neglect induce such fearful consequences. The present is a season of great peril to the rising generation. It is distinguished by a remarkable developement of human power, activity, and freedom. The progress of science has given men a new control of nature, and in this way has opened new sources of wealth and multiplied the means of indulgence, and in an equal degree multiplied temptations to worldliness, cupidity, and crime. Our times are still

more distinguished by the spirit of liberty and innovation. Old institutions and usages, the old restraints on the young, have been broken down. Men of all conditions and ages think, speak, write, act, with a freedom unknown before. Our times have their advantages. But we must not hide from ourselves our true position. This increase of power and freedom, of which I have spoken, tends, in the first instance, to unsettle moral principles, to give to men's minds a restlessness, a want of stability, a wildness of opinion, an extravagance of desire, a bold, rash, reckless spirit. These are times of great moral danger. Outward restraints are removed to an unprecedented degree, and consequently there is a need of inward restraint, of the controlling power of a pure religion, beyond what was ever known before. The principles of the young are exposed to fearful assaults, and they need to be fortified with peculiar care. Temptations throng on the rising generation with new violence, and the power to withstand them must be proportionably increased. Society never needed such zealous efforts, such unslumbering watchfulness for its safety, as at this moment; and without faithfulness on the part of parents and good men, its bright prospects may be turned into gloom.

Sunday-schools belong to this period of society. They grow naturally from the extension of knowledge, in consequence of which more are qualified to teach than in former times, and they are suited to prepare the young for the severe trials which await them in life. As such, let them be cherished. The great question for parents to ask is, how they may strengthen their children against temptation, how they can implant in *them* principles of duty, purposes of virtue, which will

withstand all storms, and which will grow up into all that is generous, just, beautiful, and holy in feeling and action. The question, how your children may prosper most in life should be secondary. Give them force of character, and you give them more than a fortune. Give them pure and lofty principles, and you give them more than thrones. Instil into them Christian benevolence and the love of God, and you enrich them more than by laying worlds at their feet. Sunday-schools are meant to aid you in the great work of forming your children to true excellence. I say they are meant to aid you, not to relieve you from the work, not to be your substitutes, not to diminish domestic watchfulness and teaching, but to concur with you, to give you fellow-laborers, to strengthen your influence over your children. Then give these schools your hearty support, without which they cannot prosper. Your children should be your first care. You indeed sustain interesting relations to society, but your great relation is to your children; and in truth you cannot discharge your obligations to society by any service so effectual, as by training up for it enlightened and worthy members in the bosom of the family and the church.

Like all schools, the Sunday-school must owe its influence to its teachers. I would, therefore, close this discourse with saying, that the most gifted in our congregation cannot find a worthier field of labor than the Sunday-school. The noblest work on earth is to act with an elevating power on a human spirit. The greatest men of past times have not been politicians or warriors, who have influenced the outward policy or grandeur of kingdoms; but men, who, by their deep wisdom and generous sentiments, have given light and life to the

minds and hearts of their own age, and left a legacy of truth and virtue to posterity. Whoever, in the humblest sphere, imparts God's truth to one human spirit, partakes their glory. He labors on an immortal nature. He is laying the foundation of imperishable excellence and happiness. His work, if he succeed, will outlive empires and the stars.

THE PHILANTHROPIST.

A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF THE REV. NOAH WORCESTER, D. D.

BOSTON, NOVEMBER 12, 1837.

JOHN xiii. 34: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

IT was the great purpose of Christ to create the world anew, to make a deep, broad, enduring change in human beings. He came to breathe his own soul into men, to bring them through faith into a connexion and sympathy with himself, by which they would receive his divine virtue, as the branches receive quickening influences from the vine in which they abide, and the limbs from the head to which they are vitally bound.

It was especially the purpose of Jesus Christ to redeem men from the slavery of selfishness, to raise them to a divine, disinterested love. By this he intended that his followers should be known, that his religion should be broadly divided from all former institutions. He meant that this should be worn as a frontlet on the brow, should beam as a light from the countenance, should shed a grace over the manners, should give tones of

sympathy to the voice, and especially should give energy to the will, energy to do and suffer for others' good. Here is one of the grand distinctions of Christianity, incomparably grander than all the mysteries which have borne its name. Our knowledge of Christianity is to be measured, not by the laboriousness with which we have dived into the depths of theological systems, but by our comprehension of the nature, extent, energy, and glory of that disinterested principle, which Christ enjoined as our likeness to God, and as the perfection of human nature.

This disinterestedness of Christianity is to be learned from Christ himself, and from no other. It had dawned on the world before in illustrious men, in prophets, sages, and legislators. But its full orb rose at Bethlehem. All the preceding history of the world gives but broken hints of the love which shone forth from Christ. Nor can this be learned from his precepts alone. We must go to his life, especially to his cross. His cross was the throne of his love. There it reigned, there it triumphed. On the countenance of the crucified Saviour there was one expression stronger than of dying agony, — the expression of calm, meek, unconquered, boundless love. I repeat it, the cross alone can teach us the energy and grandeur of the love which Christ came to impart. There we see its illimitableness ; for he died for the whole world. There we learn its inexhaustible placability ; for he died for the very enemies whose hands were reeking with his blood. There we learn its self-immolating strength ; for he resigned every good of life, and endured intensest pains in the cause of our race. There we learn its spiritual elevation ; for he died not to enrich men with outward and worldly goods,

but to breathe new life, health, purity, into the soul. There we learn its far-reaching aim ; for he died to give immortality of happiness. There we learn its tenderness and sympathy ; for amidst his cares for the world, his heart overflowed with gratitude and love for his honored mother. There, in a word, we learn its Divinity ; for he suffered through his participation of the spirit and his devotion to the purposes of God, through unity of heart and will with his Heavenly Father.

It is one of our chief privileges as Christians, that we have in Jesus Christ a revelation of perfect love. This great idea comes forth to us from his life and teaching, as a distinct and bright reality. To understand this is to understand Christianity. To call forth in us a corresponding energy of disinterested affection, is the mission which Christianity has to accomplish on the earth.

There is one characteristic of the love of Christ, to which the Christian world are now waking up as from long sleep, and which is to do more than all things for the renovation of the world. He loved individual man. Before his time the most admired form of goodness was patriotism. Men loved their country, but cared nothing for their fellow-creatures beyond the limits of country, and cared little for the individual within those limits, devoting themselves to public interests, and especially to what was called the glory of the State. The legislator, seeking by his institutions to exalt his country above its rivals, and the warrior, fastening its yoke on its foes and crowning it with bloody laurels, were the great names of earlier times. Christ loved man, not masses of men ; loved each and all, and not a particular country and class. The human being was dear to him for his own sake, not for the spot of earth on which he lived, not for

the language he spoke, not for his rank in life, but for his humanity, for his spiritual nature, for the image of God in which he was made. Nothing outward in human condition engrossed the notice or narrowed the sympathies of Jesus. He looked to the human soul. That he loved. That divine spark he desired to cherish, no matter where it dwelt, no matter how it was dimmed. He loved man for his own sake, and all men without exclusion or exception. His ministry was not confined to a church, a chosen congregation. On the Mount he opened his mouth and spake to the promiscuous multitude. From the bosom of the lake he delivered his parables to the throng which lined its shores. His church was nature, the unconfined air and earth; and his truths, like the blessed influences of nature's sunshine and rain, fell on each and all. He lived in the highway, the street, the places of concourse, and welcomed the eager crowds which gathered round him from every sphere and rank of life. Nor was it to crowds that his sympathy was confined. He did not need a multitude to excite him. The humblest individual drew his regards. He took the little child into his arms and blessed it; he heard the beggar crying to him by the wayside where he sat for alms; and in the anguish of death, he administered consolation to a malefactor expiring at his side. In this shone forth the divine wisdom as well as love of Jesus, that he understood the worth of a human being. So truly did he comprehend it, that, as I think, he would have counted himself repaid for all his teachings and mighty works, for all his toils, and sufferings, and bitter death, by the redemption of a single soul. His love to every human being surpassed that of a parent to an only child. Jesus was great in all things, but in nothing greater than

in his comprehension of the worth of a human spirit. Before his time no one dreamed of it. The many had been sacrificed to the few. The mass of men had been trodden under foot. History had been but a record of struggles and institutions which breathed nothing so strongly as contempt of the human race.

Jesus was the first philanthropist. He brought with him a new era, the era of philanthropy; and from his time a new spirit has moved over the troubled waters of society, and will move until it has brought order and beauty out of darkness and confusion. The men whom he trained, and into whom he had poured most largely his own spirit, were signs, proofs, that a new kingdom had come. They consecrated themselves to a work at that time without precedent, wholly original, such as had not entered human thought. They left home, possessions, country; went abroad into strange lands; and not only put life in peril, but laid it down, to spread the truth which they had received from their Lord, to make the true God, even the Father, known to his blinded children, to make the Saviour known to the sinner, to make life and immortality known to the dying, to give a new impulse to the human soul. We read of the mission of the Apostles as if it were a thing of course. The thought perhaps never comes to us, that they entered on a sphere of action until that time wholly unexplored; that not a track had previously marked their path; that the great conception which inspired them, of converting a world, had never dawned on the sublimest intellect; that the spiritual love for every human being, which carried them over oceans and through deserts, amid scourgings and fastings, and imprisonments and death, was a new light from heaven breaking out on earth, a new rev-

dation of the divinity in human nature. Then it was, that man began to yearn for man with a godlike love. Then a new voice was heard on earth, the voice of prayer for the recovery, pardon, happiness of a world. It was most strange, it was a miracle more worthy of admiration than the raising of the dead, that from Judea, the most exclusive, narrow country under heaven, which hated and scorned all other nations, and shrunk from their touch as pollution, should go forth men to proclaim the doctrine of human brotherhood, to give to every human being, however fallen or despised, assurances of God's infinite love, to break down the barriers of nation and rank, to pour out their blood like water in the work of diffusing the spirit of universal love. Thus mightily did the character of Jesus act on the spirits of the men with whom he had lived. Since that time the civilized world has been overwhelmed by floods of barbarians, and ages of darkness have passed. But some rays of this divine light break on us through the thickest darkness. The new impulse given by Christianity was never wholly spent. The rude sculpture of the dark ages represented Jesus hanging from his cross; and however this image was abused to purposes of superstition, it still spoke to men of a philanthropy stronger than death, which felt and suffered for every human being; and a softening, humanizing virtue went from it, which even the barbarian could not wholly resist. In our own times, the character of Jesus is exerting more conspicuously its true and glorious power. We have indeed little cause for boasting. The great features of society are still hard and selfish. The worth of a human being is a mystery still hid from an immense majority, and the most enlightened among *us have* not looked beneath the surface of this great truth.

Still there is at this moment an interest in human nature, a sympathy with human suffering, a sensibility to the abuses and evils which deform society, a faith in man's capacity of progress, a desire of human progress, a desire to carry to every human being the means of rising to a better condition and a higher virtue, such as has never been witnessed before. Amidst the mercenariness which would degrade men into tools, and the ambition which would tread them down in its march toward power, there is still a respect for man as man, a recognition of his rights, a thirst for his elevation, which is the surest proof of a higher comprehension of Jesus Christ, and the surest augury of a happier state of human affairs. Humanity and justice are crying out in more and more piercing tones for the suffering, the enslaved, the ignorant, the poor, the prisoner, the orphan, the long-neglected seaman, the benighted heathen. I do not refer merely to new institutions for humanity, for these are not the most unambiguous proofs of progress. We see in the common consciousness of society, in the general feelings of individuals, traces of a more generous recognition of what man owes to man. The glare of outward distinction is somewhat dimmed. The prejudices of caste and rank are abated. A man is seen to be worth more than his wardrobe or his title. It begins to be understood that a Christian is to be a philanthropist, and that, in truth, the essence of Christianity is a spirit of martyrdom in the cause of mankind.

This subject has been brought to my mind, at the present moment, by an event in this vicinity, which has drawn little attention, but which I could not, without self-reproach, suffer to pass unnoticed. Within a few days, a great and good man, a singular example of the

philanthropy which Jesus Christ came to breathe into the world, has been taken away; and as it was my happiness to know him more intimately than most among us, I feel as if I were called to bear a testimony to his pure goodness, and to hold up his example as a manifestation of what Christianity can accomplish in the human mind. I refer to the Rev. Noah Worcester, who has been justly called the Apostle of Peace, who finished his course at Brighton during the last week. His great age, for he was almost eighty, and the long and entire seclusion to which debility had compelled him, have probably made his name a strange one to some who hear me. In truth, it is common in the present age, for eminent men to be forgotten during their lives, if their lives are much prolonged. Society is now a quick-shifting pageant. New actors hurry the old ones from the stage. The former stability of things is strikingly impaired. The authority which gathered round the aged has declined. The young seize impatiently the prizes of life. The hurried, bustling, tumultuous, feverish Present, swallows up men's thoughts, so that he who retires from active pursuits is as little known to the rising generation as if he were dead. It is not wonderful, then, that Dr. Worcester was so far forgotten by his contemporaries. But the future will redress the wrongs of the present; and in the progress of civilization, history will guard more and more sacredly the memories of men who have advanced before their age, and devoted themselves to great but neglected interests of humanity.

Dr. Worcester's efforts in relation to war, or in the cause of peace, made him eminently a public man, and constitute his chief claim to public consideration; and *these* were not founded on accidental circumstances or

foreign influences, but wholly on the strong and peculiar tendencies of his mind. He was distinguished above all whom I have known, by his comprehension and deep feeling of the spirit of Christianity; by the sympathy with which he seized on the character of Jesus Christ as a manifestation of Perfect Love; by the honor in which he held the mild, humble, forgiving, disinterested virtues of our religion. This distinguishing trait of his mind was embodied and brought out in his whole life and conduct. He especially expressed it in his labors for the promotion of Universal Peace on the earth. He was struck, as no other man within my acquaintance has been, with the monstrous incongruity between the spirit of Christianity and the spirit of Christian communities; between Christ's teaching of peace, mercy, forgiveness, and the wars which divide and desolate the church and the world. Every man has particular impressions which rule over and give a hue to his mind. Every man is struck by some evils rather than others. The excellent individual of whom I speak was shocked, heart-smitten, by nothing so much as by seeing that man hates man, that man destroys his brother, that man has drenched the earth with his brother's blood, that man, in his insanity, has crowned the murderer of his race with the highest honors; and, still worse, that Christian hates Christian, that church wars against church, that differences of forms and opinions array against each other those whom Christ died to join together in closest brotherhood, and that Christian zeal is spent in building up sects, rather than in spreading the spirit of Christ, and enlarging and binding together the universal church. The great evil on which his mind and heart fixed, was War, Discord, Intolerance, the substitution of force for

Reason and Love. To spread peace on earth became the object of his life. Under this impulse he gave birth and impulse to Peace Societies. This new movement is to be traced to him above all other men; and his name, I doubt not, will be handed down to future time with increasing veneration as the "Friend of Peace," as having given new force to the principles which are gradually to abate the horrors, and ultimately extinguish the spirit of war.

The history of the good man, as far as I have learned it, is singularly instructive and encouraging. He was self-taught, self-formed. He was born in narrow circumstances, and, to the age of twenty-one, was a laborious farmer, not only deprived of a collegiate education, but of the advantages which may be enjoyed in a more prosperous family. An early marriage brought on him the cares of a growing family. Still he found, or rather made, time for sufficient improvements to introduce him into the ministry before his thirtieth year. He was first settled in a parish too poor to give him even a scanty support; and he was compelled to take a farm, on which he toiled by day, whilst in the evening he was often obliged to use a mechanical art for the benefit of his family. He made their shoes; an occupation of which Coleridge has somewhere remarked, that it has been followed by a greater number of eminent men than any other trade. By the side of his work-bench he kept ink and paper, that he might write down the interesting thoughts, which he traced out, or which rushed on him amidst his humble labors. I take pleasure in stating this part of his history. The prejudice against manual labor, as inconsistent with personal dignity, is one of the most irrational and perni-

cious, especially in a free country. It shows how little we comprehend the spirit of our institutions, and how deeply we are tainted with the narrow maxims of the old aristocracies of Europe. Here was a man uniting great intellectual improvement with refinement of manners, who had been trained under unusual severity of toil. This country has lost much physical and moral strength, and its prosperity is at this moment depressed, by the common propensity to forsake the plough for less manly pursuits, which are thought however to promise greater dignity as well as ease.

His first book was a series of letters to a Baptist minister, and in this he gave promise of the direction which the efforts of his life were to assume. The great object of these letters was, not to settle the controversies about baptism, about the mode of administering it, whether by immersion or sprinkling, or about the proper subjects of it, whether children or adults alone. His aim was to show that these were inferior questions, that differences about these ought not to divide Christians, that the "close communion," as it is called, of the Baptists, was inconsistent with the liberal spirit of Christianity, and that this obstruction to Christian unity ought to be removed.

His next publication was what brought him into notice, and gave him an important place in our theological history. It was a publication on the Trinity; and what is worthy of remark, it preceded the animated controversy on that point, which a few years after agitated this city and commonwealth. The mind of Dr. Worcester was turned to this topic not by foreign impulses, but by its own workings. He had been brought up in the strictest sect, that is, as a Calvinist. His first doubts

as to the Trinity arose from the confusion, the perplexity, into which his mind was thrown by this doctrine in his acts of devotion. To worship three persons as one and the same God, as one and the same being, seemed to him difficult, if not impossible. He accordingly resolved to read and examine the Scriptures from beginning to end, for the purpose of ascertaining the true doctrine respecting God, and the true rank of Jesus Christ. The views at which he arrived were so different from what prevailed around him, and some of them so peculiar, that he communicated them to the public under the rather quaint title of "Bible News relating to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." His great aim was to prove, that the Supreme God was one person, even the Father, and that Jesus Christ was not the Supreme God, but his Son in a strict and peculiar sense. This idea of "the peculiar and natural sonship" of Christ, by which he meant that Jesus was derived from the very substance of the Father, had taken a strong hold on his mind, and he insisted on it with as much confidence as was consistent with his deep sense of fallibility. But, as might be expected in so wise and spiritual a man, it faded more and more from his mind, in proportion as he became acquainted with, and assimilated to, the true glory of his Master. In one of his unpublished manuscripts, he gives an account of his change of view in this particular, and, without disclaiming expressly the doctrine which had formerly seemed so precious, he informs us that it had lost its importance in his sight. The moral, spiritual dignity of Christ, had risen on his mind in such splendor, as to dim his old idea of "natural sonship." In one place he affirms, "I do not recollect an instance [in the Scrip-

tures] in which Christ is spoken of as loved, honored, or praised, on any other ground than his Moral dignity." This moral greatness he declares to be the highest with which Jesus was clothed, and expresses his conviction, "that the controversies of Christians about his natural dignity, had tended very little to the honor of their Master, or to their own advantage." The manuscript to which I refer, was written after his seventieth year, and is very illustrative of his character. It shows that his love of truth was stronger than the tenacity with which age commonly clings to old ideas. It shows him superior to the theory, which more than any other he had considered his own, and which had been the fruit of very laborious study. It shows how strongly he felt that progress was the law and end of his being, and how he continued to make progress to the last hour. The work called "Bible News," drew much attention, and converted not a few to the doctrine of the proper unity of God. Its calm, benignant spirit had no small influence in disarming prejudice and unkindness. He found, however, that his defection from his original faith had exposed him to much suspicion and reproach; and he became at length so painfully impressed with the intolerance which his work had excited, that he published another shorter work, called "Letters to Trinitarians," a work breathing the very spirit of Jesus, and intended to teach, that diversities of opinion, on subjects the most mysterious and perplexing, ought not to sever friends, to dissolve the Christian tie, to divide the church, to fasten on the dissenter from the common faith the charge of heresy, to array the disciples of the Prince of Peace in hostile bands. These works obtained such favor, that he was solicited to leave the ob-

[illegible] town in which he ministered, and to take charge, in this place, of a periodical called at first the Christian Disciple, and now better known as the Christian Examiner. At that time (about twenty-five years ago) I first saw him. Long and severe toil, and a most painful disease, had left their traces on his once athletic frame; but his countenance beamed with a benignity which at once attracted confidence and affection. For several years he consulted me habitually in the conduct of the work which he edited. I recollect with admiration the gentleness, humility, and sweetness of temper, with which he endured freedoms, corrections, retrenchments, some of which I feel now to have been unwarranted, and which no other man would so kindly have borne. This work was commenced very much for doctrinal discussions, but his spirit could not brook such limitations, and he used its pages more and more for the dissemination of his principles of philanthropy and peace. At length he gave these principles to the world, in a form which did much to decide his future career. He published a pamphlet, called "A Solemn Review of the Custom of War." It bore no name, and appeared without recommendation, but it immediately seized on attention. It was read by multitudes in this country, then published in England, and translated, as I have heard, into several languages of Europe. Such was the impression made by this work, that a new association, called the Peace Society of Massachusetts, was instituted in this place. I well recollect the day of its formation in yonder house, then the parsonage of this parish; and if there was a happy man that day on earth, it was the founder of this institution. This society gave *birth* to all the kindred ones in this country, and its

influence was felt abroad. Dr. Worcester assumed the charge of its periodical, and devoted himself for years to this cause, with unabating faith and zeal; and it may be doubted, whether any man who ever lived, contributed more than he to spread just sentiments on the subject of war, and to hasten the era of universal peace. He began his efforts in the darkest day, when the whole civilized world was shaken by conflict, and threatened with military despotism. He lived to see more than twenty years of general peace, and to see through these years a multiplication of national ties, an extension of commercial communications, an establishment of new connexions between Christians and learned men through the world, and a growing reciprocity of friendly and beneficent influence among different States, all giving aid to the principles of peace, and encouraging hopes which a century ago would have been deemed insane.

The abolition of war, to which this good man devoted himself, is no longer to be set down as a creation of fancy, a dream of enthusiastic philanthropy. War rests on opinion; and opinion is more and more withdrawing its support. War rests on contempt of human nature; on the long, mournful habit of regarding the mass of human beings as machines, or as animals having no higher use than to be shot at and murdered for the glory of a chief, for the seating of this or that family on a throne, for the petty interests or selfish rivalries which have inflamed States to conflict. Let the worth of a human being be felt; let the mass of a people be elevated; let it be understood that a man was made to enjoy inalienable rights, to improve lofty powers, to secure a vast happiness; and a main pillar of war will fall. And is it not plain that these views are taking place of the contempt

in which man has so long been held. We find much support in the prejudices and partialities of a narrow patriotism. Let the great Christian principle of human brotherhood be comprehended, let the Christian spirit of universal love gain ground, and just as fast the custom of war, so long the pride of men, will become their abhorrence and execration. It is encouraging to see how outward events are conspiring with the influences of Christianity in promoting peace; how an exclusive nationality is yielding to growing intercourse; how different nations, by mutual visits, by the interchange of thoughts and products, by studying one another's language and literature, by union of efforts in the cause of religion and humanity, are growing up to the consciousness of belonging to one great family. Every railroad, connecting distant regions, may be regarded as accomplishing a ministry of peace. Every year which passes without war, by interweaving more various ties of interest and friendship, is a pledge of coming years of peace. The prophetic faith with which Dr. Worcester, in the midst of universal war, looked forward to a happier era, and which was smiled at as enthusiasm, or credulity, has already received a sanction beyond his fondest hopes, by the wonderful progress of human affairs.

On the subject of war, Dr. Worcester adopted opinions which are thought by some to be extreme. He interpreted literally the precept, Resist not evil; and he believed that nations, as well as individuals, would find safety, as well as "fulfil righteousness," in yielding it literal obedience. One of the most striking traits of his character, was his confidence in the power of love, I might say, in its omnipotence. He believed, that the surest way to subdue a foe was to become his friend;

that a true benevolence was a surer defence than swords, or artillery, or walls of adamant. He believed, that no mightier man ever trod the soil of America than William Penn, when entering the wilderness unarmed, and stretching out to the savage a hand which refused all earthly weapons, in token of brotherhood and peace. There was something grand in the calm confidence with which he expressed his conviction of the superiority of moral to physical force. Armies, fiery passions, quick resentments, and the spirit of vengeance, miscalled honor, seemed to him weak, low instruments, inviting, and often hastening, the ruin which they are used to avert. Many will think him in error; but if so, it was a grand thought which led him astray.

At the age of seventy, he felt as if he had discharged his mission as a preacher of peace, and resigned his office as Secretary to the Society, to which he had given the strength of many years. He did not, however, retire to unfruitful repose. Bodily infirmity had increased, so that he was very much confined to his house; but he returned with zeal to the studies of his early life, and produced two theological works, one on the Atonement, the other on Human Depravity, or the moral state of man by nature, which I regard as among the most useful books on these long-agitated subjects. These writings, particularly the last, have failed of the popularity which they merit, in consequence of a defect of style, which may be traced to his defective education, and which naturally increased with years. I refer to his diffuseness, to his inability to condense his thoughts. His writings, however, are not wanting in merits of style. They are simple and clear. They abound to a remarkable degree in ingenious illustration, and they have often the charm

which original thinking always gives to composition. He was truly an original writer, not in the sense of making great discoveries, but in the sense of writing from his own mind, and not from books or tradition. What he wrote had perhaps been written before; but in consequence of his limited reading, it was new to himself, and came to him with the freshness of discovery. Sometimes great thoughts flashed on his mind as if they had been inspirations; and in writing his last book, he seems to have felt as if some extraordinary light had been imparted from above. After his seventy-fifth year he ceased to write books, but his mind lost nothing of its activity. He was so enfeebled by a distressing disease, that he could converse but for a few moments at a time; yet he entered into all the great movements of the age, with an interest distinguished from the fervor of youth only by its mildness and its serene trust. The attempts made in some of our cities, to propagate atheistical principles, gave him much concern; and he applied himself to fresh inquiries into the proofs of the existence and perfections of God, hoping to turn his labors to the account of his erring fellow-creatures. With this view, he entered on the study of nature as a glorious testimony to its almighty Author. I shall never forget the delight which illumined his countenance a short time ago, as he told me that he had just been reading the history of the coral, the insect which raises islands in the sea. "How wonderfully," he exclaimed, "is God's providence revealed in these little creatures!" The last subject to which he devoted his thoughts, was slavery. His mild spirit could never reconcile itself to the methods in which this evil is often assailed; but the greatness of the evil he deeply felt, and he left several essays on this as on

the preceding subject, which, if they shall be found unfit for publication, will still bear witness to the intense, unfaltering interest with which he bound himself to the cause of mankind.

I have thus given a sketch of the history of a good man, who lived and died the lover of his kind, and the admiration of his friends. Two views of him particularly impressed me. The first, was the unity, the harmony of his character. He had no jarring elements. His whole nature had been blended and melted into one strong, serene love. His mission was to preach peace, and he preached it not on set occasions, or by separate efforts, but in his whole life. It breathed in his tones. It beamed from his venerable countenance. He carried it, where it is least apt to be found, into the religious controversies which raged around him with great vehemence, but which never excited him to a word of anger or intolerance. All my impressions of him are harmonious. I recollect no discord in his beautiful life. And this serenity was not the result of torpidness or tameness; for his whole life was a conflict with what he thought error. He made no compromise with the world, and yet he loved it as deeply and constantly as if it had responded in shouts to all his views and feelings.

The next great impression which I received from him, was that of the sufficiency of the mind to its own happiness, or of its independence on outward things. He was for years debilitated, and often a great sufferer; and his circumstances were very narrow, compelling him to so strict an economy, that he was sometimes represented, though falsely, as wanting the common comforts of life. In this tried and narrow condition, he was

among the most contented of men. He spoke of his old age as among the happiest portions, if not the very happiest, in his life. In conversation his religion manifested itself in gratitude more frequently than in any other form. When I have visited him in his last years, and looked on his serene countenance, and heard his cheerful voice, and seen the youthful earnestness with which he was reading a variety of books, and studying the great interests of humanity, I have felt how little of this outward world is needed to our happiness. I have felt the greatness of the human spirit, which could create to itself such joy from its own resources. I have felt the folly, the insanity of that prevailing worldliness, which, in accumulating outward good, neglects the imperishable soul. On leaving his house and turning my face toward this city, I have said to myself, how much richer is this poor man than the richest who dwell yonder! I have been ashamed of my own dependence on outward good. I am always happy to express my obligations to the benefactors of my mind; and I owe it to Dr. Worcester to say, that my acquaintance with him gave me clearer comprehension of the spirit of Christ, and of the dignity of a man.

And he has gone to his reward. He has gone to that world of which he carried in his own breast so rich an earnest and pledge, to a world of Peace. He has gone to Jesus Christ, whose spirit he so deeply comprehended and so freely imbibed; and to God, whose universal, all-suffering, all-embracing love he adored, and in a humble measure made manifest in his own life. But he is not wholly gone; not gone in heart, for I am sure that a better world has heightened, not extinguished, his affection for his race; and not gone in influence, for his

thoughts remain in his works, and his memory is laid up as a sacred treasure in many minds. A spirit so beautiful ought to multiply itself in those to whom it is made known. May we all be incited by it to a more grateful, cheerful love of God, and a serener, gentler, nobler love of our fellow-creatures.

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